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Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Compositions on Planets

By

Prof. GOWRI KUPPUSWAMY & DR. M. HARIHARAN

The second half of the 18th century witnessed a remarkable renaissance in the realm of Carnatic music. During this period were born the three great composers—Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshitar and Syama-Sastri—collectively known as the Trinity of Carnatic music. They were outstanding both for their musical excellence and devotional fervour. While Thyagaraja voiced forth different aspects of our philosophy, *Bhakti* alone is the keynote of the songs of the other two composers. Dikshitar's compositions have both a popular and a learned phase.

GROUP KRITIS

Among the Trinity, Dikshitar is best known for his group kritis. Group kritis are sets of compositions either on a particular deity or on related themes. Each set consists of 5 or 9 songs. Dikshitar's pañchaliṅga kritis, as the name itself implies, consists of a set of five compositions. According to Saivaite tradition, Lord Siva manifests himself in the form of 5 bhutas or elements—Appu (water), Vāyu (wind), Thēyu (fire), Prithvi (earth) and Ākāśa (sky)—in the five kshētras of Jambūkeśvaram, Kālabasti, Tiruvannāmalai, Coṅjeevaram and Chidambaram respectively. The Pañchaliṅga kritis are on these five incarnations of Lord Śiva.

All other group kritis of Dikshitar invariably consist of groups of nine compositions.

Each set is on a particular deity like Lord Subramanya, Madhurāmba, Kamalāmba or Abhayāmba. They are based on the extra-musical concept of Vibhakti or case, a grammatical construction. Each song of these sets belongs to one of the nine vibhaktis—nominative, accusative etc. In the case of the Kamalamba and Abhayamba group kritis, one can see Dikshitar's extraordinary skill and talent in our mantric and tantric doctrines. In South India, in the tradition expounded by Bhaskararaya, Sri Vidya had been practised as a *Sādhana mārḡa* for salvation by the Advaitins. Dikshitar has based his Kamalamba and Abhayamba kritis on Bhaskararaya's precepts.

THE NAVAGRAHA KRITIS

The last set of Dikshitar's group kritis—the navagraha kritis—are also nine in number, but they are not on some deity, nor are they based on the Vibhakti principle. The Navagraha kritis are on the nine planets or grahas—Sun (Sūrya), Moon (Chandra), Mars (Kūja), Mercury (Budha), Jupiter (Guru), Venus (Śukra), Saturn (Śani) and the two *chāya* (Shadow) grahas Rāhu and Kēthu. Dikshitar has composed this set of his group kritis on the purely musical basis of one Sūlādi Sapta Tāla (Dhruva, Maṭhya, Rūpaka, Jhampa, Tripūta, Aṭa and Eka) for each of the first seven Navagraha kritis on the seven *grahas* other than the *Chāya grahas*. The composition

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of the Navagraha kritis on the basis of Tālas is particularly appropriate because Tāla is a time measure and in astrology periods of time have vital significance in the context of the influence of different planets on man's fortunes. According to astrology each *graha* determines the destiny of man during its *daśa* which in each case extends over a definite period of time (number of years). Tala, also being a time measure, can spell the vicissitudes of time during which the planets hold sway over man's fortunes.

THE MAGICAL "12"

The division of the octave into 12 units, was used by all the ancient nations of the world and is known as the primordial division of the octave. The Zodiac also has 12 divisions which corresponds to the 12 divisions of the octave and astrology has come in handy to explain the intervals of the octave and the effects produced by the swaras. The seven planets represent the seven swaras and the 12 divisions of the Zodiac are distributed among the 7 planets corresponding to the distribution of the 12 divisions of the octave among the 7 swaras. Among the 7 planets the Sun and the Moon have each one of the divisions of the Zodiac corresponding to Sa and Pa in the musical octave. The remaining 5 planets have each two divisions as is the case with the remaining 5 swaras in the musical scale. In astrology these divisions are called houses (Mesha, Rishabha etc.,) belonging to the planets. In this way one can readily see the connection between music and astrology. This coincidence between the divisions of the Zodiac and the divisions of the octave serves as the best means to explain the musical scales on a mathematical basis. The major planets being the Sun and the Moon, the basic note Sa is assigned to the prime planet Sun and Pa, the second important note of the octave

to the Moon. The remaining 5 swaras are assigned in the following order: Ri to Budha, Ga to Sani, Ma to Sukra, Dha to Kuja and Ni to Guru. Next to Sa and Pa, the most important swara is Ma and it is noteworthy that this swara is ascribed to Sukra, one of whose important portfolios is music itself.

MANTRA, TANTRA SASTRA

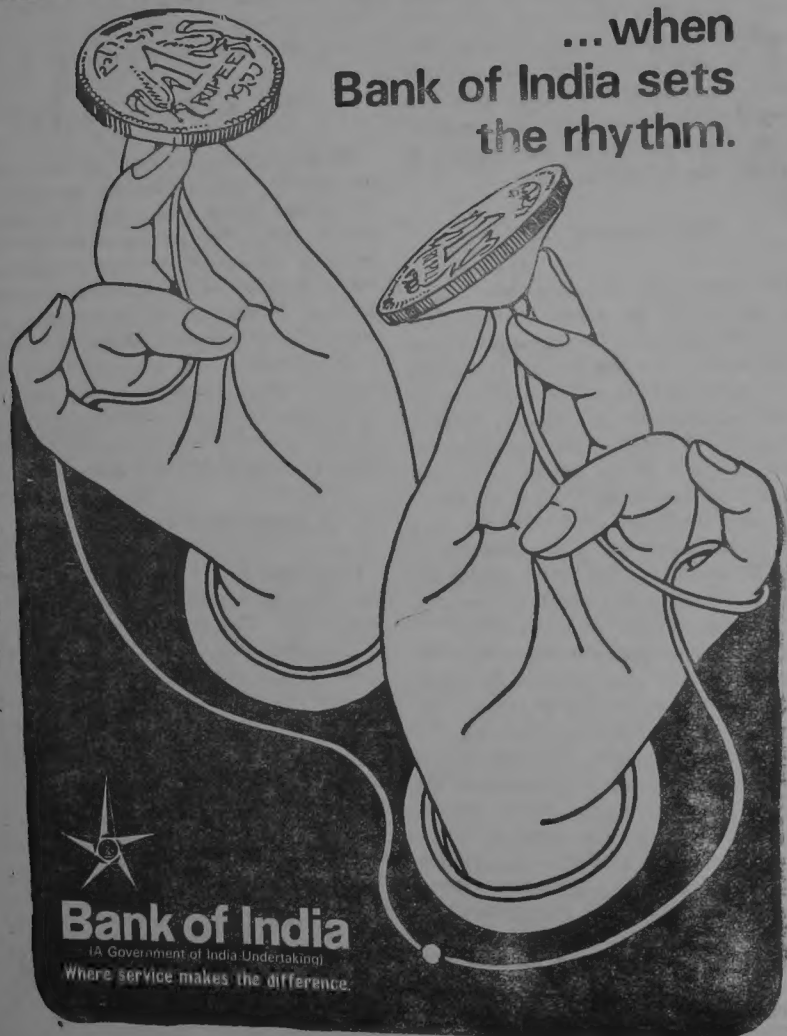
Dikshitar's Navagraha kritis are not based on phrases borrowed from the Navagraha *Stōtras* and *Kavachas* contained in our epics and Puranas. They are original poetic compositions. Mantra Sastra is an esoteric lore but its benefits can be derived even by the common devotees if the lore consists of ordinary hymns and songs. All the Navagraha kritis of Dikshitar are easily accessible versions of mantric and tantric sastras as they pertain to the different grahas. For the lay public they form effective prayers to the different grahas calculated to earn their grace.

DETAILS OF THE NINE

The first composition in the group, 'Sūrye-mūrthe' on the Sun is in Saurāshṭra rāga and Dhruva tāla. This raga is a sampurna raga in Dikshitar's school, fit to be sung at all times. It is a janya of Mayamalavagaula, the first raga practised by musicians. The tāla is the first among the Sūlādi sapta tālas and has the highest number of *Aksharakalas*. The words 'Saurashtrana manthrathmane' denote that the sun is the adhipathi for Saurashtra mantra and in this way, incidentally, the name of the raga has also been skilfully woven into the text of the shabhyas. The Uttaranga delineates vira rasa and the Purvanga bhakti rasa. The phrase 'namosthuthe' comes in descending order from Madhyasthayi to Mandrasthayi, reflecting the obeisance of the singer to the Sun.

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The second composition 'Chandram bhaja'on the Moon who is the Lord of the mind, is set to Asāveri raga and Maḥya tala, the second among the Sūladi saptha tālas. Asāveri is a very soft *rakṭhi* raga portraying *karuna rasa* and is eminently suited to the hymn on the Moon.

The third song, 'Aṅgārakam', on Kuja is set to Surāṭi raga and Rūpaka tala, the third among the Suladi saptha tālas. In spite of the phrase 'Maṅgalavāram Aṅgārakam Āsrayāmyaham', Maṅgalavāram is really not considered auspicious. Again Surāṭi raga is one sung for Maṅgala; still nobody teaches this raga directly to the students and in this way this raga is also *amaṅgala*. The selection of this raga which is at once *maṅgala* and *amaṅgala* for a song on this graha which is also *maṅgala* and *amaṅgala* at the same time is a masterstroke of Dikshitar's genius. Unlike other Suladisapta talas, Rupaka tala begins with *dhrutam* followed by *laghu*. The use of this time beat with inauspicious *vilakṣaṇa* for the compositions on this *amaṅgala graha* also bears eloquent testimony to Dikshitar's skill and imagination as a composer.

The next song 'Budham āsrayāmi' on Budha is set to Nāṭakurunji rāga and Jhampa tāla, the fourth of the Suladisapta talas. This kriti contains soft tender words like 'kamanīyadhara mithuna kanyadhipam, madhura kavīṭapradam etc., and the mood of the *rakṭhi* raga Natakurunji admirably suits the diction.

The fifth song in the group, 'Brihaspathe' on Guru is set to Athāna rāga and Tripuṭa tala, the next tāla in the Suladi saptha tāla series. Astrologically Guru is considered a very beneficial planet capable of getting rid of all doshas and ending all miseries. While Athāna itself means getting free from imprisonment or in other words, getting rid of the fetters

of Samsara. This rāga portrays *adbhuta* and *vira rasas*. The choice of this raga admirably suits singing such *sahitya* phrases as Mahā-balavibhō, Kishpathe, jagatrayagurō nṛa-mayāya etc.

The next song in the series, 'Śukra bhagavantham' on Śukra, itself contains many astrological terms. Actually śukra is *Rakṣhasa* guru accepted as one of the navagrahas. This song is set to Pharaz, a *desiya rakṭhi* raga and Ata tala, the sixty Suladi saptha tala. In fact pharaz is a foreign raga adopted to the Carnatic music fold. It is highly appropriate that Dikshitar has used this raga for his song on this graha who is the Rakṣhasa guru and also the *karaka* for kalatra, marital happiness and last but not the least, for musical abilities.

The seventh song is 'Divākaranujam' on Sani, the universally feared graha. It is set to Yadukulakāmbhōdhi raga and Eka tala, the last (seventh) of the Suladi Sapta tala. Yadukulakambodhi is common in the folk music of most countries. Songs in this raga are invariably sung in Vilamba kala or slow tempo and its mood also fits in well with the notoriously slow movement of this graha.

THE CASE OF RAHU, KETU

The last two grahas, Rāhu and Kētu, are different from the other seven in that they are minor planets or *chayagrahas* as is evident from the fact that unlike the others, these two grahas do not have any days of the week named after them (Bhānuvara, Sōmavāra, Maṅgalavāra, Budhavāra, Guruvāra, Śukravāra and Śanivāra). Nor do they own houses in the Indian astrological system of 12 houses. It is believed that these two *chāya-grahas* do not have any individual status of their own but share the same body. Dikshitar has chosen different categories of ragas and a

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vilakshana tala for his compositions on these grahas to pinpoint this variation in their nature.

The songs 'Smarāmyaham' on Rahu and 'Mahāsūram' in Kethu are set to two pratimadhyama ragas in contrast to the compositions on the other seven grahas which are all in Suddhamadhyama ragas. 'Smarāmyaham' is in Rāmāmanohari (Rāmapriya) raga and 'Mahāsūram' is in Chāmaram (Shanmukha-priya) raga. Pratimadhyama ragas do not belong to the ancient group of ragas; they have come into vogue only in comparatively recent times. Again the tala of both these compositions is Rupaka which is the vilakshana tala in the Suladisapta talas series (also used for the Navagraha kritis on Mangala). The genius of Dikshitar as a composer lies in the fact that he has effectively brought out

the difference of the two chayagrahas from the rest by adopting Pratimadhyama ragas and the Vilakshana tala for his compositions on these two grahas.

It can thus be seen that Muthuswamy Dikshitar has not only taken pains to choose appropriate ragas for his compositions on each of the nine grahas but also used all the Suladisapta talas enumerated in the famous Tala aphorism for his Navagraha kritis. The adoption of this tala principle for this set of group kritis bears testimony to his outstanding abilities in music and unparalleled gifts as a composer. A noteworthy feature or interesting coincidence is that the sum total of the aksharas of all the talas used in these kritis is 81, which is, again, a multiple of 9, the number of all the grahas, the magic number!

Gopala Krishna Bharathi

By

T. S. VASUDEVAN, B.A.,

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Gopala Krishna Bharathi is one of the best composers who have dedicated their creative genius to bring out the beauty of Carnatic music through the medium of Tamil compositions. Like the Trinity in Carnatic Music, he was a 'Vaggeyakara' i.e., a musician and composer, combined in one.

composition. The 'Dhruva' and 'Charanas, of the "Ashtapathi" formed the basis for the pallavi and charanas of the Kirtana in the 14th century with the advent of the Haridasas of Karnataka.

PURANDARA

In the Tamil music literature, the earliest known musical form is the Thevaram. Scholars have found the original Panns, 23 in number (corresponding to the later developed "Raga") and equated them to "ragas" of the modern Carnatic music. After a very long lapse of time (i.e., about 400 years), the Gita Govinda by Jayadeva, was the first regular musical

The illustrious "Sangeetha Pithamaha" of Carnatic Music was Saint Purandhara Dasa. He has contributed several thousands of the compositions known as 'kriti' though they are popularly known as "Dasara Padagalu". This form came to be perfected in the hands of Tyagaraja whose compositions strictly conform to the "lakshanas" of the "kriti",

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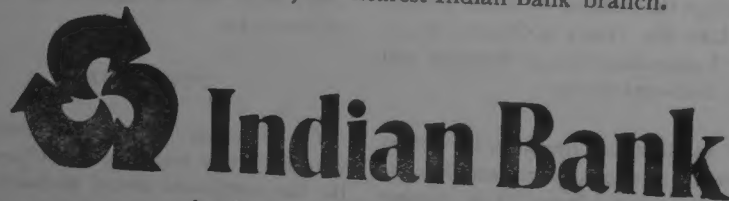
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KIRTANA—KRITI

In this connection, it may be interesting to note the essential differences between "Keertana" and "kriti", the latter being considered as the outcome of the former. The "Keertanas" are strictly hymns of praise to God and so Sahitya or Matu is more predominant than Sangita or Dhatu, whereas in the Kriti, the Sangitha is elaborate and the Sahitya is clothed in a simple and musical style so as to allow room for display of musical excellences (viz., neraval, kalpana swaras and sangathis etc.)

Though Gopala Krishna Bharathi took as his model the compositions of his predecessors like Arunachala Kavirayar, Papavinasu Mudaliar, Ghanam Krishna Iyer, yet he loved to breathe the fragrant atmosphere of the lyrical music of his more powerful and illustrious contemporary, Thyagaraja. Still, the major portions of his compositions consist of "Keertanas" only, which have more appeal to the mass of hearers and inculcate devotion and religious fervour.

SOURCE—MATERIALS

Many details about the composer's biography and attainments are available from the beautiful book in Tamil entitled "Gopala Krishna Bharathiar", written by the late Mahamahopadyaya Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer who was a younger contemporary of Gopalakrishna Bharathiar. (He was 17 years old when the former was about 70).

¹ Ghanam Krishna Iyer was a great musician and composer of Tamil padas who taught Bharathi the art, as well as his own compositions.

Gopala Krishna Bharathi flourished about the beginning of the 19th Century (about 150 years ago). His birth place is a village called Narimanam near Nagapattinam. His father was one Ramaswami Bharathi (Brahmin of Vadama sect), son of Kothandarama Bharathi, both musicians proficient in Veena playing. Naturally, he inherited his knowledge of music from them. But losing his parents when young, with none to protect him and having a philosophic mind, he took to the life of a wandering mendicant. A few landlords who were living in Mudikondan and Ananthandavapuram and who were lovers of music patronised him. With their help, he soon studied Sanskrit, Tamil literature and music as well. But he adhered to the life of a devout bachelor, throughout his life.

GURU

In this 30th year, he found his spiritual Guru in Govindasivan, a great Yogi and gnani at Mayavaram and got initiation in Yoga and Vedanta. He also had many opportunities to hear the famous musicians of his time like Ghanam Krishna Iyer¹ and Thyagayya and developed his fine musical talents in a short time. He had also an opportunity to learn Hindusthani Music under one Ramadoss at Thiruvudaimarudur. Incidentally, his scholarship in Tamil helped him to acquire skill in composing keertanas himself. The keertanas first composed by him were all in praise of his Guru, Govinda Sivan.

LORD NATARAJA

From his boyhood he had entertained a great devotion towards Lord Nataraja at Chidambaram which he regularly visited.

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during the annual festivals. As he grew older, he began to realise the great significance and truth of the cosmic dance of Nataraja and spent hours in meditation on the Lord in the temple. In moments of ecstasy, he propitiated the Lord with innumerable songs which were, then, and are even today, admired by all. Vidwas and others learnt them from him and began to popularise them. But a tremendous tide of Thyagaraja's soul-stirring songs was sweeping all and it is no wonder that Bharathi's heart was stirred to meet the great Rama Bhaktha.

THYAGARAJA WORSHIP

He, therefore, went one day to Tiruvayar and met Thyagayya. His disciples were then singing a Kriti "Sri Ramya Chitta Alankara Swaroopa" (ஸ்ரீரம்ய சித்தாலங்கார ஸ்வரூப) in Abhogi Raga¹. Thyagayya, having also heard of Bharathi, welcomed him and enquired whether he had composed any kriti in that raga. Bharathi kept silent and continued to feast his ears with some more kritis of Thyagaraja. The same evening, when he visited the famous Siva Temple at Thiruvayyar, the Abhogi piece of Thyagaraja was working in his mind and before he returned next morning to the latter's house, he had already composed the kriti "Sabhpathiku Veru Daivam" (சபாபதிக்கு வேறு தெய்வம்) in Abhogi raga, which he sang before the saint. Thyagayya heartily appreciated his knowledge of music and his deep devotion to Nataraja.

When he returned to Mayavaram, he began to compose several kritis on the model of Thyagaraja's. In the wake of the latter's Pancha Ratna Keertanas, Bharathi also sang

five keertanas one of which is "Hara Hara Siva Sankara Karunakara" (ஹரஹர சிவசங்கர கருணாகர) in Nata corresponding to "Jagadananda Karaka" (ஜகதானந்த காரக) of Thyagayya.

INSPIRATION FOR NANDANAR

Bharathi by this time, had many disciples who popularised his songs. Special mention may be made of one Siva Sankara Dikshitar of Chidambaram, noted musician-composer and devotee of Lord Nataraja. By this valuable acquaintance, Bharathiar's devotion to Nataraja was strengthened. It is said that an idol of Thirunalai povar Nayanar (திருநாளைப் போவார் நாயனார்) (One of the 63 saivite saints), popularly known as Nandanar, standing in a pillar facing the west *sannidhi* at Chidambaram, inspired him and he burst forth in the famous song expressing Nanda's longing to be *always* blessed to have the darsan of Nataraja viz., "Enneramum undan Sannidhiyile Nan Irukka venumayya" (என்றேர மும் உந்தன் ஸந்தியில் நான் இருக்க வேணுமெய்யா) in Devagandhari Raga. (This was included later in a suitable place in his famous Nandan Charitra opera).

PILGRIMAGES

Bharathi also used to go on pilgrimage to other holy shrines in South India and sing songs in praise of the presiding deities. As an instance, mention may be made of his Keertana in Nandanamakriya entitled "Kanale kannden verondrum vendamale nindren" (கண்ணலே கண்டேன் வேறென்றும் வேண்டாமலே நின்றேன்) composed at Tiruvannamalai for the famous Karthikai Deepam.²

¹ This song is now sung in Jayamanohari.

² In the last charana, the author refers to the famous lamp lit on the top of Tiruvannamalai Hill thus—சிந்தை மகிழவே மலைமுகட்டினில் தீப தரிசனம் தாபம் தீரவே கண்ணலே கண்டேன்.

KALAKSHEPAMS

He had by this time also acquired proficiency in performing "Katha kalakshepams", employing wonderful tunes and feasting the audience with suitable sub-stories and humorous incidents. Persuaded by his friends and disciples and inspired by his own staunch devotion, he was seriously thinking of evolving the story of a great saivite Saint. While at Nagapattinam, two merchants who were brothers and staunch saivas, by name Kandappa chettiar and Chellappa chettiar, expressed their long cherished desire to hear, in keertana form, the story of one of the "Nayanmars" from the mouth of the renowned composer.

THE NANDANAR THEME

As he was pondering over the theme of this work, there dawned upon his mind thoughts of the said Nandanar whose statue inspired him at Chidambaram. This, he felt, would further afford him vast scope for composing on Nataraja who was his "Ishta devatha". So he finally decided to evolve the story of this great devotee Nanda (called "Thirunalaippar" as he was always saying from his heart of hearts—"Nalaikke poven (நாளாக்கே போவேன்)).

One day Kandappa chettiar sent him a basket of fruits and the sight of the same immediately suggested to him the key word to commence the *Nandanar charitram*. He at once began a "chindu" (சிந்து) beginning with the words "Pazhana Marunganaiyum" (பழன மருங்கனையும்) in Punnagavarali Raga and continued to sing, giving a graphic description of the native village of Nanda and its surroundings. His friends rejoiced at the pros-

pect of fulfilment of their desire at a nearly date.

TOUCH OF ORIGINALITY

Bharathiar began composing his masterpiece at Nagapattinam and continued it at Mayavaram. He expanded the original story of Nandanar as narrated in the *Periapuranam* (by Sekkizhar in about 37 verses) enriching it with his originality in conformity with the characteristics of a beautiful opera in Tamil. He also employed Ragas, along with simple and melodious Tamil suitable to the different situations. Several of his exclusive keertanas on Nataraja were also appropriately introduced into the body of the work.

IMAGINATION

The rich Brahmin landlord in the opera, under whom Nandanar worked as his cultivator, is the creation of Bharathi's fertile poetic imagination. The arrogance and cruelty of the former is depicted in striking contrast with the servant's humility, loyalty and devotional traits. This contrast is worked out to a climax when, by the miraculous intervention of Lord Nataraja, the entire stretch of barren lands owned by the landlord (forty velis) is cultivated within a night's duration, and blooming crops are ready for harvest overnight.

GREAT CONVERSION

This is done in order to allow Nandanar, His devotee, to obtain permission to go to Chidambaram. This is also a turning point in the landlord's character, by which he not only repents for his past actions but also begs spiritual enlightenment from his devoted servant¹. Nandanar's transformation into

an ascetic and ultimate union with the Lord at Chidambaram as stated in the *Periapuranam*, are expanded by Bharathiar with beautiful descriptions of Nandanar's pilgrimage, crossing of the Coleroon river, his unbounded ecstasy on reaching Chidambaram, his deep yearning, despair and anxiety in getting the Lord's blessings. The songs composed in this context will melt even the most hard-hearted. The words and the melodies chosen are so well knit together as to enchant the hearers¹. In fact, the author has evidently identified himself with his "hero" and pours forth his own feelings and spiritual ideas—the yearnings of a desperate soul for reunion with the Supreme (Paramatma).

SIGNIFICANCE

The spiritual significance of this musical opera can be epitomized as under.

Nandanar represents the soul (Jiva—ஜீவ) held in bondage (பந்தம்) by the landlord representing the body, holding the soul in thralldom by selfishness and avarice (Ahankara and Mamakara). The hardships undergone by the servant represent the many obstacles that lie on the pathway of the soul's quest, from which it is relieved by divine grace only. The purification of Nandanar at Chidambaram and his ultimate union with the supreme is surely the annihilation of the sinful

body and the highest realisation of the soul viz. (Jiva Brahma Ikyam).

STAGING THE OPERA

As soon as the work was finished, Bharathi went again to Nagapattinam where his patrons arranged for its publicity. It is said that his performance lasted for three consecutive nights. It captivated one and all with its vivid descriptions, humorous dialogues, philosophic truths, its simple but elegant style and highly original and captivating melodies unheard of before. It was repeated several times in several places.

PUBLICATION

Some officials from the Collectorate at Karaikal who attended the "Katha" for several nights are said to have fallen asleep during office hours. The Collector, a Frenchman by name Seesay, on hearing about the excellence of the "Nandanar Charitram" from his officials, immediately invited Bharathi to go over to Karaikal and perform the "Katha". He was then so much moved by the performance, that he offered to undertake the publication of the "Katha" if the author would permit. Bharathi readily consented to the magnanimous offer and handed over a manuscript for publication. The first edition was printed in the year 1861 (October) at Madras².

¹ வருகலாகமோ (மாஞ்சி), இது தானே தில்லைத்தலம் (பிறாக்க), எப்போ வருவாரோ (ஜேகண்டி), வருவாரோ வந்தருவாரோ (சாமா), அறிவுடையோர் (சக்ரவாகம்), உனது திருவடி நம்பி (ஸரஸாங்கி), திருவடி சரணமென்று (காம்போதி) . . .

² The front page of the book contains the citation given below.

சிவமயம், பெரியபுராணம் அறுபத்துமூன்று நாயன்மார்களில் சிதம்பரத்தில் முத்தி பெற்றவராகிய திருநாளைப் போவார் சரித்திரக் கீர்த்தனை. இஃது முடிக்கொண்டான் கோபால கிருஷ்ண பாரதியாரால் நூதனமாக இயற்றியதைக் காரைக்கால் கலெடர் எரி ஸே துரை யவர்கள் உத்தரவின்படி மேற்படியருர் தூண்பராகாசப் பிள்ளையவர்களாலும் பிடி அருணாசலப் பிள்ளை அவர்களாலும் பரிசோதித்து, புறச்சு குண்ணப்ப முர்த்தி அவர்களால் கல்வி விளக்க அச்சுக் கூடத்தில் பதிப்பிக்கப்பட்டது (துன்மதி ஸ்ரீ, ஐப்பசி மீ, 28-உ.)

¹ The land lord asks pardon of Nanda : குற்றமெத்தை செய்த போதிலும் உன்றன் சித்தத்தில் நினையாதே, சிவ பக்த னென்று அறியாமல் பதறி வார்த்தைகள் சொன்ன பாவம் தொலையாதே. நந்தா நீ ஒரு உபதேசம் நவீன்றிட வேணும் நான் கடைத்தேற.

After the publication, the work began to enjoy such a wide popularity and appreciation that every home in South India was resounding with Gopalakrishna Bharathi's songs and won for the author immortal fame. Eminent scholars and musicians paid warm encomiums to him and helped not a little in the popularisation of the unique composition. For instance, Bharathi caught the admiration of Arumuga Navalar of Ceylon, Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai and Vedanayagam Pillai. Arumuga Navalar met him once at Chidambaram Temple and was moved by the devotional fervour expressed in his songs. Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, the renowned Tamil scholar who lived at Mayavaram, took a special delight in hearing his kritis, especially when sung by the composer himself. Though the scholar was first reluctant to give an appreciation of the work, he was eventually so deeply moved by the songs¹ that he readily composed an introductory verse expressing his great appreciation thereof. Vedanayakam Pillai, a Munsif of the place and a Christian and author of 'Sarva Samaya Samarasa keertanas', was attracted by the Nandanar Charitra songs, many of which he learnt and even composed many in imitation².

Besides the masterpiece Nandanar, Bharathi is said to have composed in similar style "Iyarpahai Nayanar Charitram" (இயற்பகை நாயனார் சரித்திரம்), Karaikkal Ammayar charitram (காரைக்கால் அம்மையார் சரித்திரம்), Thiru Neelakanta Nayanar charitram (திருநீலகண்ட நாயனார் சரித்திரம்), Gnana chinu (ஞானச் சிந்து) and Gnana kummi (ஞானக் கும்மி). Thiru Neelakanta Nayanar charitram and Iyarpada Nayanar charitram have been compiled by Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer, while the others have not yet seen the light of day, except songs sung here and there during Siva Katha performances.

Though Bharathiar was somewhat uncouth in his appearance, he was always dressed in clean and simple clothes and was very saintly to look at. He loved solitude but was capable of conversing briskly and humorously. He was skilled in the art of speaking in rhymes and punning upon words. These skills found appropriate use in his masterpiece in the shape of "Irusol Alankaram" (இருசொல் அலங்காரம்)³.

MEETING MAHAVIDYANATHA IYER

During the last years of his life Bharathi lived at Mayuram in the house of one of his

disciples—named Ramaswami Iyer. It is here that the celebrated musician Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer and his elder brother Ramaswami Sivan, composer of the Periapurana Kritis, used to meet him and learn his songs. It was also here that the memorable meeting took place in October 1876 between Bharathi and the renowned Krishna Bhagavathar of Thanjavur, a rising musician-cum-katha performer who was greatly responsible for the popularisation of the "Nandanar Charitram" in the year which followed. It is said that Bharathiyar himself came to attend the "Kalakshepam" of the Nandanar charitram which was so magnificently done with all its characteristic features that Bharathiar was moved to express his heartfelt felicitations over the performance. Gopalakrishna Bharathiar, upto his demise on a Mahasivarathri night in 1896 in his 95th year, spent his hours exclusively in meditation and religious discourses.

SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO ART OF MUSIC

With regard to his contribution to Carnatic music, Bharathiar with his vivid imagination and bright intellect has enriched our music literature by bringing out its beauty through Tamil. He reveals his originality in handling the Ghana, Naya and Desiya ragas. With the exception of some Hindusthani modes like Amir Kalyani, Yamuna kalyani, Behag and Apurva ragas like Manji, Soorya kantam, Sarasangi, Bangala, Saindavi and Kannada Behag—he generally employed the popular ragas.

It lies to the great credit of Bharathi that he popularised—and thereby saved from oblivion—

the musical form *Nondichindu*¹, one of the ancient compositions in Tamil music. Besides this, Bharathiar has also skilfully incorporated other forms like 'Kanni' (கண்ணி), 'Ananda kalippu' (ஆனந்த களிப்பு), 'Dandakam' (தண்டகம்), 'Savai' (சவாய்) and 'Lavani' (லாவணி), the last two being melodies of Mahratta origin. The "mudra" at the last charana of each keertana used by Gopalakrishna Bharathi consists of two types—Gopalakrishna and Balakrishna. Like Thyagaraja, he uses his mudra to convey two meanings viz., to denote Krishna as an avatar of Vishnu—in some (மாயன் கோபாலக்ருஷ்ணன், பாரளந்த பாலக்ருஷ்ணன், தும்பிக்கருளிய பாலக்ருஷ்ணன், அரவணை கோபாலக்ருஷ்ணன், கோபாலக்ருஷ்ணன் மத்தளம் போட— and in some others, he refers to himself.

INCLUSION IN BHAJANA PADDATI

The "Nandanar Charitram" attained immense celebrity inasmuch as it is a favourite theme in religious discourses, dramas and even on the silver screen. On account of its great devotional fervour, the keertanas therefrom have found an important place in the "Bhajana Sampradaya" of South India, along with eminent compositions of Purandaradasa, Sadasiva Brahmendral, Bhadrachala Ramadasa and Thyagaraja, preceding the puja item, as "Nataraja Dhyana".

Even the famous emotional poet of our National Renaissance, Sri Subrahmanya Bharathi, has adopted the theme of Nandanar Charitram to fit in with our struggle for freedom. He has portrayed patriots Bala Gangadhar Tilak and Gokhale, as Nandanar fighting for freedom with the Landlord representing the British.

¹ ஐயா வொரு சேதி கேளும். நொண்டிச் சிந்து, ராகம், செஞ்சுருட்டி. (This is a vivid report about Nandanar and his plans to reform the village people who do not like the same and who therefore represent them to the Landlord.)

FUSION OF POETRY AND MUSIC

In the evolution of music literature, the earlier recitative type of music viz Thevaram, Tiruppugazh, Divyaprabhandam, Ramana-nataka keertanas, etc., gave place to the lyrical types, like the compositions of the Trinity, the best specimens of that type in the latter half of the 18th century. At this stage of composition, composers like Ghanam Krishna Iyer and Gopalakrishna Bharathi appeared. Though their compositions are not wholly lyrical, they breathe perceptibly its chastening atmosphere. Bharathi's style is a fusion of the two, not only enriching the musical literature in Tamil but also appealing to the masses, through the effective medium

of music, inculcating devotion and spiritual thoughts. Such unique compositions which are to be preserved as our rich heritage will continue to inspire people with undiminished splendour at all times.

Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer concludes very aptly his biography of this illustrious person thus:

"I have no doubt that Sri Gopalakrishna Bharathi's fame will never fade out. The effective words of praise about Nandanar coming from the heart of Bharathi most suitably applies to himself. "பக்தியில் கரை கண்டவன் பார்த்துப் பார்த்து உண்டவன்".

Some Essential norms for Rendering Krithis *

By

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The one and only ideal of singing, so far as Karnatak Music is concerned, is embodied in "raga pradhanam sangeetham". The creation of a musical atmosphere or Satwika gana rasa, is possible only when the "raga roopa" stands most truly and beautifully established. The varna, krithis, ragam-thanam-pallavi, padam, javali, ragamalika and tillana constitute the items of an ideal concert. In this paper, I will deal with that part of the performance where the krithis are rendered.

Before a performer offers to give a 'katcheri' it is expected that he has acquired the basic minimum equipment comprehensively

termed as "Sangeetha Gnanam" which *inter alia* means: capacity for rendering a varnam in three degrees of speed, ease of vocal expression in two to two-and-a half octaves, control of laya in vilamba, madhya and druta degrees of speed. These require "sadhana" over quite a number of years. Similar facility of execution on instruments will demand even greater effort and perseverance. Not all are gifted with the same degree of ease of expression.

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

For a Karnataka Sangeetha Vidwan, one essential requisite is that he or she has don't

* Gist of a talk-cum-demonstration given at the Music Academy, Madras in December 1980.

enough sadhana to be able to render effectively the krithis of the classical Trinity which comprise a wide range of "eduppas" and kala pramana. Madhyama kala appeals most. Vilamba kala gives depth and profundity. Quick sancharas done with a pure vocal intonation retaining anuswaras and the raga rasa lend peculiar charm and vivacity to the rendering of krithis. To give a dignified recital, the selection must be very judicious so as not to exclude any of the above aspects nor overdo only a few of them. A total neglect of Vilamba kala in alapana and even in the rendering of Pallavis (4-Kalai Pallavi has become very rare) and of the great Padams have made most musicians nearly incapable of handling krithis of 2 Kalai-chowkam in an impressive manner. The necessity of singing at least one Padam after a Vilamba manodharma Pallavi must be insisted upon. All young artistes must cultivate the difficult padams and sing atleast one of them as Sri Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar used to do after a 4-Kalai pallavi ("Paiveda", "Ninnu-joochi" etc.)

SAHITYA

The vocalist must also fully understand the sahitya of the composition and take great care in uttering the sahitya clearly, correctly and musically and not give a sentimental, pert expression. Vocal extensions should be round-mouthed and correct. Expressions like 'Yi Yi Yi' should be avoided. Akara should not be contoured into 'E E' or 'A M'. If the full import of the sahitya is grasped by the performer, the krithi rendering would be more effective and will bring out the 'feeling' of the krithi.

"PRASIDHA" RAGAS

All ragas are not of the same quality. We have Uttama, Madhyama, Sadharana or

Adhama Ragas. The "prasiddha" ragas are of the first category. In a performance where sangita is the main concern, a selection of krithis must have more of the "swaroopa suddha" ragas; one or two lesser known ragas should suffice. The krithis, too, are not all of the same order of excellence. There are uttama, madhyama and sadharana krithis. This is true even of the krithis of the Trinity! There are krithis which could be rendered at all times—they have a universal appeal. Quite a few are songs more appropriate for an occasion.

SELECTION TO SUIT OCCASION

When the music recitals are arranged in temples or utsavams, the scope of selection will be conditioned by the appropriateness of the temple atmosphere. If a series of recitals are arranged for Sree Rama Navami, Gokulashtami, Vinayaka Chaturthi, Ayyapa or Saibaba festivals, often wholly word oriented devotional items are chosen. This accustoms people to cheap or somewhat unmusical Rasanubhava. Even on such occasions, it is my view that we should create the right musical atmosphere by giving prominence to the usual accepted krithis of the masters and then only give a few songs appropriate to the occasion. There are krithis which are classics for all times, a few are only for a season; a few just for an occasion. A performer must make a good selection and in the handling make it musically weighty or just render it without a ponderous display of musical variations.

I am concerned about an unfortunate trend. When we go to a temple, we should sing songs of classical and musical worth and not necessarily songs on that deity, often necessitating resort to krithis either improvised or poorly composed. The latter create a low taste and cannot give the performer or listener real joy

of artistic fulfilment. I would point out that this phenomenon is wholly absent in the Hindusthani area where classical expression is all that is expected. Gana rasa is the surest approach to the divine for a musician.

PROPER PLANNING

Now about a few norms in a sangeetha katcheri. All the krithis of the day must be properly planned. A few madhyamakala krithis, followed by a grand composition like "Rama Bana", "Sri Subrahmanyaya Namaste", must be rendered with good alapana, neraval and swaram which will provide appropriate Peethika and Vyakhyana respectively. The krithis must be in all the varying kala pramanas. One or two songs in Jhampa (Khanda Chapu) and Misra Chapu would lend vivacity. A few krithis in which sangathis are few and one or two where sangathis are many, could be very effective. "Patantara suddham" needs to be revived. What often happens is that a 'popular' vidvan renders a lot of sangathis suited to his voice and genius. This is imitated by all younger vidvans

Leaders of the profession should bear the sloka of the Bhagavad Geetha in mind:—

“यद्यदाचरते श्रेष्ठः तद्वदेवैतरो जनः
स यद्यमानमूकुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

“Yadyadācharathe Sreshtaha
Tatradevētaro janaha
Sa yat Pramanam kuruthe
Lokas Tadanu Vartate.”

In all this the music of the krithi loses its real, lasting appeal. In this process, the “kavi hridayam” gets badly distorted or obliterated.

KRITIS—PRECIOUS HERITAGE

The sum and substance of musical wealth is contained in the krithis of the Trinity and other masters. A krithi is an embodiment of a musical poem and thought set on some handy sahitya. If the krithis of Tyagaraja, Dikshitar and Syama Sastri are learnt in “karna parampara”, real sangeetha gnanam is ensured. These must be heard very often. Other compositions must be weighed against these for their musical content—raga tala rachana and then only accepted. A krithi that does not have much musical content is often chosen due to so many extraneous compulsions.

Uttama krithis have a universality of appeal. They are quite effective even when rendered by a beginner or a junior Vidvan. They lend ample scope—indeed limitless inexhaustible scope—for development in the hands of a senior Vidvan. Even if the song is rendered with just the minimum of sangathis, the rasikas are really pleased. There are quite a few krithis which are effective only in the hands of a great vidvan who has command over his audiences. Often we find that, to popularise a krithi of ordinary musical content, elaborate raga, neraval and swara vistara are added—quite wastefully and without producing genuine Gana Rasa. Krithis which have great intrinsic musical build and stuff should form the bulk of the selection. Krithis in ragas of small scope could be left to the masters for elaborate handling. If the Patantara is traditional and unhampered, we have the music of the masters duly and properly preserved and we should pass them down to posterity.

WHAT TO AVOID

The trends that have to be kept in check so that the music of the masters is preserved

and steadily kept before the listening public are as follows:

- (1) Learning a krithi from a notated script, without having ever listened to the song rendered by one who has learnt it by karna parampara or a competent musician.
- (2) Adding one's own sangathis just to suit his voice and style of rendering, without regard for aesthetics or the composer's plan.
- (3) Changing the Kala Pramana of the krithis either due to lack of sadhana or as a show-off.
- (4) Offering to rectify the traditional thinking of arohana and avarohana, unaware of obsolete sancharas.
- (5) Displacing the words in Sahitya with the misplaced idea of enhancing the “artha bhavam”.
- (6) Rendering a krithi without the appropriate interpretation; Syama Sastri krithi without laya grip or a krithi like “Najeevadhara” without the madhyama kala sangathis.
- (7) Rendering the elaborate and heavy krithis in ordinary recitals e.g., Dikshitar's Navavarana kriti in Ahiri raga.

SANGATHIS

Can sangathis be added? The answer is both Yes and No. If the sangathis are an extension of the main musical setting and if they are dignified, they could be accepted. It should be possible for the listeners to know what the krithi would be without those sangathis (G.N.B's songs). That is the real

test. In this the very setting of the krithi should not be changed. I will give a few examples. Take “Chintaya Ma” in Bhairavi. It is often rendered in a fast tempo. This was reportedly done by Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer. Another recent instance. “Seshachela Nayakam” in Varali, or “Ramanatham Bajeham” in Pantuvarali. Dikshitar krithis have suffered the most on this score. What we have is mostly songs of middling worth rendered like “stotra malikas” with Gurukula Mudra e.g., “Gajanana Yutam” and “Kamakshi” in Chakravakam and Simhendra Madhyamam respectively.

Then the krithis of Tyagaraja. Take “Nagumomu”. The lack of *suddha dhaivata* makes it an attractive Bhimplasi wholly unsuited to the anguish of Tyagaraja in not getting the glimpse of Sri Rama's face!

Sangathis could be added during the neraval e.g., “Aragimpave”—“Raghu veera” kriti.

THE GRAND MANNER

If my son or a student wants me to tell him what a grandiloquent style of Raga alapana is—say, as Tiger had done it—what can I do! I am only a lamb or a cat; I can only sing a krithi of Muthuswami Dikshitar and of Tyagaraja in Bhairavi and ask him to cultivate that grand style! If the krithis are modified, their grandeur is lost. Splitting of words to suit the Tala is akin to distorting of chandas in a poem. Example:

“Aviveka Ma Navula Korikori”
“Raghuvara NannuMa Ravataguna”
“EndaroMa Hanu Bhavulu”

I beg of performers to pronounce the words correctly with a musical charm and not accustom the listener to a display of cheap

sentimental wordy fare: If the krithis of the masters are cultivated with great care, and made our own speciality by dedicated application, we get the power to convey the music to the listener.

FULLNESS OF EQUIPMENT

A poor brahmin took the letter of Loka Matha Rukmini to Lord Krishna - what did he know of its divine content? Even so Thyagaraja's song is an appeal to Sri Rama and of Dikshitar to Ambal. We are humble, not very competent but sincere, conveyors of the divine message. Let us get the full equipment of bhava, raga and tala and enough sahitya gnaana and more than that, the needed "Hridaya Samskara" and then render the krithis of the masters.

Bhringi Natesa Sameeraja
Ghataja Matanga
Naradadulu Upasinchane
Sangeeta Gnanamu Bhaktivina
Sanmargamu galade!

In fine, the ideal of rendering a krithi of the great Vaggeyakaras could be deemed as nearly achieved if, when the krithi is rendered, the listeners exclaim "What a grand musical edifice is this krithi of Thyagaraja or Dikshitar"; and when the performer adds lustre by way of a Raga alapana or neraval or a few chosen sangathis after attaining due maturity of musical thinking—the listener must be drawn to the performing capabilities of the musician rendering the krithis. But what obtains on most occasions is that patantharas are dressed up with the thought of readying them, so to say, for "sabha ranjakatwa"; we listen to that particular vidwan's music more prominently all the while and this irrespective

of whether it is a krithi of Thyagaraja or Dikshitar or Sadasiva Rao or Vasudevacharya. For serene sober rendering, the Mridangam should just offer a *nadai* or *teka* like a tabla vidvan in a vocal khyal recital in Hindusthani Music. Madhyamakala sancharas *all the while* is the most unfortunate trend that tends to keep the styles of the great composers not distinct and apart. A few krithis in apurva ragas are the sole living examples of the melodic entity of such less popular ragas. These krithis of Dikshitar and Thyagaraja should be preserved so that the lakshyas are available for posterity.

TANAM, PALLAVI, NEGLECTED

In a modern concert of 2½ hours' duration, I feel Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi should have its rightful and glorious pedestal; 45 minutes should be allotted. One padam, a javali or a light or classical light song should occupy 15 to 20 minutes. Light music these days is a highly evolved, specialised subject. There are giants who have mastered rendering of "Light Music," with engaging gifts of voice. Days of *tukdas* by classical vidwans are gone. We should give simple devotional songs, javalis, tillana etc., or a slokam. Just one varnam and three or four krithis in varying melakarthis and kalapramanam could be rendered. Lastly, while a performer must be able to render all the well-known krithis ably and in a satisfying manner, a few must be made *his* masterpiece and a listener must know Thyagaraja or Dikshitar more through this performer's grand handling of them. Ideals—hard to reach always—help us to achieve more and more. The struggle is never ending. Indeed, that is the real joy of a sangitha sadaka!

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By

Smt. SUSHEELA MISRA

The cultural and artistic products of an era reflect not only its emotional background and physical conditions, but also "the particular projections, temper, and aspirations" of that era. These are closely connected with the social, economic, ethical, and artistic life of the period. The Moghul emperors had brought into North India a gay, new style of life carrying with it a great love for the pleasures of life. In this new atmosphere, both the spirit and themes of Hindustani music underwent a great change. The high poetry, lofty themes, and coldly intellectual style of the DHRUVAPAD had to give way to "embellished prose-poems" or KHAYALS which, to a large extent, mirrored the courtly lives of the times. Later on, when the Moghul Empire in Delhi tottered, the patronage of music and other fine arts passed into the hands of the cultured Nawabs of Awadh (Oudh). They were hedonists who made a cult of sensualism. Famed for their refinement and elegance, they were great patrons of music and dance. Leading lives of pleasure and opulence, these "Neo-romanticists" craved, for music unshackled by too many raga-conventions, and free from many of the restrictions that bound the Khayal. Khayal-style seemed to them to be stressing more on the *swaras* than on the meaning of the words of the song (*sahitya*).

Just as the Khayal was evolved as a revolt against the excessive rigours and severe style of the Dhruvapad, similarly, the THUMRI was created at this stage in

order to give greater freedom than the KHAYAL in the matter of technique and treatment of ragas, and also to lay greater emphasis on interpretation of word-contents.

Origin

Thumri Was born in Uttar Pradesh, and Lucknow is known as "the Motherland Of Thumri". It was shaped out of the folk-songs indigenous to Awadh and its neighbouring areas. "Whenever classical music reached a blind alley, it annexed folk-music for revival and reconstruction". Folk-songs have been, in fact, a perennial source of inspiration from which have been drawn several types of light classical music, numerous ragas, and talas. A sample of *Kajari Chaiti*, *Sawan*, or *Poorvi Dhun* will show how strongly the *Thumri* resembles these parent-forms. The language of *Thumri* is invariably in the rural dialects like *Avadhi*, *Brijhasha*, or *Bhojpuri* and so on. But when harnessed to classical music, the musical part became very sophisticated and refined.

Association with Dance

"THUM" or "THUMUK" means a "dance-stop" and "Thumuk" also suggests "a small size". Thus the very etymology of the word "Thumri" indicates "a small song associated with dance". In his book "Treatise On The Music Of Hindustan" (1834), Captain Willard refers to the *Thumri* as "a very modern species of song in the impure dialect of the *Brajhasha*". Perhaps a similar form existed as a folk or "Desi"

variety in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, etc., to the accompaniment of which "*Kathikas*, *Bhands* and *Bais*" were performed.

Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan of Lucknow is generally regarded as the real inventor of this delightful form of light classical music. It thrived under the lavish patronage of the Avadh Nawabs. Later, on, it spread to Benares which came to be known as "*the sweetheart of the Thumri*". Today *Thumri* is enjoying such unparalleled popularity that no classical concert or soiree is complete without a rendering of *Thumri* or *Dadra* at the end. Features like over-ornateness and womanly delicacy of *taans* are brought forward by some critics as examples of the 'corrupting influence' of *Thumri* on the *Khayal* style. The *taans* of *Khayal* should "rush like a cataract" while those of *Thumri* should be like "fountain-sprays quivering in the silver moonlight".

Swelling Popularity

There was a time not long ago when classicists used to look down upon the *Thumri* as a degenerate form of music. The genteel arbiters of good taste frowned on it because those who sang *Thumris* were more concerned with emotional sincerity rather than with purity of ragas. Perhaps they also condemned it for its association with the professional women-dancers (*tawaifs*) who performed their "*Bhava Nritya*" to the accompaniment of appropriate *Thumris* with erotic word-contents. But very soon, this romantic type of music began to capture the ears and hearts of listeners, for, here was a type of song which unashamedly and spontaneously expressed the romantic dreams, frustrations, longings, and fulfilments of a generation of music-lovers headed by their hedonistic courtly patrons.

Before long, the puritannical prejudices of their predecessors were thrust aside when a long line of illustrious composers and talented singers polished and popularised this appealing style of light classical music. Great singers discovered its inherent potentiality for emotional expression, and felt that even when shorn of the dance portion, they could eloquently bring out the emotional contents of the song through appropriate note-modulations.

The Soul of Thumri

Thumri is a purely romantic style of music, and the expression of word-contents in all its emotive states is the very soul of *Thumri*. The requisites for a good *Thumri*-singer are an appealing and well-trained voice, an imaginative temperament, interpretative insight, absorption in the theme, and exuberance of emotion. Fed up with the technical sophistication and vocal verbosity of the *Dhrupadiyas* and *Khayaliyas*, the *Thumri* composers took up simple and typical situations from the lives of the common folks, expressed them musically, and transported them into a world of fantasy, eroticism, unabashed wooing, the pangs of separation, the ache of remembered pleasures, sweet anticipation of reunion, not unmixed with doubts and apprehensions. Such are the mundane themes around which *Thumris* are composed. The essence of the delicacy of Lucknow with all its *nazakat* and *nafazat* was thus poured into the 'voluptuous' *thumri*-mould and it was garbed in the spoken dialects of everyday parlance which added to its appeal.

Two Types.

Thumris are broadly of 2 types: 1. *Bol - bant* or *Bandish ki Thumri*. 2. *Bol - banaav ki Thumri*. The former being expressly meant for dance, its beauty

lies in rhythmic variations in the presentations of bols, and the tempo is either medium or fast. The latter type is sung in slow tempo; its notes are "twisted, turned, moulded and modulated" so as to bring out the emotional contents of the songs through various devices such as subtle graces and voice-modulations. At the end, the tempo is accelerated; this part (*laggi*) is beautifully suited for *abhinaya* in dance (Kathak).

Ragas and Talas used in Thumri

Thumris are not sung in all classical ragas like the Khayals. They are couched in comparatively 'lighter' ragas like Pilu Khamaj, Tilang, Bhairavi, Misra Kafi, Gaara, Desh, Tilak-Kamod, Jangala, Pahadi, Jhinjhoti etc, or in such ragas which are not only widely popular and appealing (like Bihag, Chandrakans etc) but also afford scope for engrafting notes and flashes from allied ragas. This blending is a deft art requiring a great deal of skill and artistry. Thumris are usually set in *tals* such as *chachar*, *Deepchandi*, *Sitarkhani*, *Kaharwa* and so on, and sometimes in khayal-talas like Trital, Ektal madhyalaya etc.

Outstanding Exponents and Composers

Among the outstanding Thumri-composers and exponents of old, some loom large and outshine the others. Lucknow's USTAD SADIQ ALI KHAN is regarded as the first real exponent of this light classical form. The famed NAWAB WAJID ALI SHAH (the last Nawab-ruler of Avadh) was not only the father of the modern Urdu stage, but also one of the greatest patrons of KATHAK, and THUMRI. His guru Thakur Prasadji was a specialist in the *Natwari* style of Kathak-dancing. The thumris specially sung for Bhavanritya (emotional interpre-

tation of songs through dance-gestures) form a lovely collection of their own. In Thakur Prasad's *gharana*, quite a few of these Thumris have been handed down from generation to generation through his nephews *Bindadin* and *Kalka Prasad*, the latter's sons Achchan, Shambhu, and Lachchu Maharajs and Achchan Maharaj's brilliant and only son, the famed Briju Maharaj. Naturally, a large number of the thumris of this category that we hear now are the compositions of the prolific and gifted composer Maharaj Bindadin. He left for his successors a large number of lilting and lyrical Thumris, mainly on the Krishna-Radha themes.

Love Theme

The *sringara-rasa* (love-theme) is exalted into a divine plane (*udaata sringara*) and the songs are mostly about the sports of Krishna, Radha, and the gopis, the exalted love of Radha, the yearnings of the gopis, and so on. The under-current of most of these lilting Thumris composed by Bindadin, the great Krishna-Bhakta, is the longing of the *Jeevatma* for ultimate union with *Paramaatma*. Their music also is rich and varied, covering many styles such as Dhruvpad, Hori, Dhamar, Khayal and Bhajan. Bindadin's Thumris are wonderfully suited for *abhinaya* in the Kathak style. Lucknow's Wajid Ali Shah was not only a Kathak dancer but a good composer and exponent of Thumris. Many of his thumris are still being sung, the most popular being the deeply haunting one in Bhairavi:—"Babul Mora Naihar Chchooto jaay". This moving Thumri believed to have been composed and sung by him at the moment of his pathetic departure from his beloved Lucknow, has now become the poignant parting song (*Bidai*) of every bride about to leave her dear parental home for the

distant land of her bridegroom. This has been one of the favourite Thumris of all famous Thumri-exponents from Malkajan of old to Siddheswari Devi, Rasoolan Bai, Begum Akhtar and Girija Devi of more recent times. It used to be a favourite of the great Aftab-e-Mausiqui Ustad Faiyaz Khan himself.

A Great Wave

It was BHAIYA GANPATRAO, a scion of the Gwalior royal family who launched the Thumri on its huge wave of popularity. Armed with such an "unpromising" musical instrument as the Harmonium, his mastery was such that he could "pluck out the heart-strings of listeners" through his expressive renderings of Thumris. Music-loving Maharajas, Nawabs, and millionaires became his ardent admirers. Among his pupils were reputed musicians like the great Moizuddin, Gauharjan, Bashir Khan, Babu Shyamlal, Sonibabu, Chamman Saheb, Raja Nawab Ali Khan, and many others,

About Moizuddin it is said that in the portrayal of emotions through thumris, he has been without a peer. Born in the intensely musical family, gifted with a remarkably sweet voice and creative talent, and trained by a great guru like Bhaiya Ganpatrao, Moizuddin has been known as "the Shahenshah among Thumri singers". It was he who brought the Banares style of Thumri to unprecedented heights of popularity. Kalka Prasad also is said to have contributed to the popularisation of Thumri in Banares by teaching many professional female singers there.

Great Thumri Composers

One of the most well-known Thumri composers of Lucknow was KADARPIYA (Wazir Mirza) a scion of the Avadh royal family, Poet, painter, scholar, and musi-

cian, he has composed a large number of Thumris which are still being sung everywhere in the North. Most of the Thumri-composers of old used a pseudonym and added the suffix "*Piya*" to their pen-names in their compositions. Thumris of widely-liked composers like *Kadarpiya*, *Sanadpiya*, *Najarpiya*, *Lalanpiya*, *Sugharpiya*, *Akhtarpiya* (*Wajid Ali Shah*), *Kunwarshyam* and *Bindadin* are being heard every day now.

Besides Bhaiya Ganpatrao, Moizuddin and Akhtarpiya, there were numerous other excellent Thumri-exponents like Smt. Rajeswari Devi, Vidyadhari Devi, Jankibai (of Allahabad), Gouharjan (of Calcutta), Zehrajan and Malkajan of Agra, Dhelabaj and several others. Although the underlying sentiment of Thumri is *sringara-rasa* (eroticism) covering *viyog* (separation) and *sanyog* (union) in all its aspects, the late Ustad Abdul Karim Khan somehow managed to lift it to a sublimer level. He could move large audiences to tears by his soulful renderings of Thumris like "*Piya milan ki aas*" (Jogia), "*Jamuna ke teer*" (Bhairavi), "*Soch samajh naadaan*" and others.

Three Main Styles or Ang.

Although Thumri was born and fostered in the fertile musical soil of Lucknow, it soon gained immense popularity all over the north, and thus sprang up three distinct styles, each tinged with some local colour and features. The *Poorab ang* or Banares style aims at appeal through simplicity. It lays emphasis on the weaving of *bols* (word-contents) along side note-elaborations, economy of embellishments, and appeal through sheer purity of notes. It avoids borrowings from too many other ragas. Moizuddin is said to have been a master of this style. Siddheswari

Devi who was one of the outstanding and recent exponents of this ang, often used to introduce effective Hindi and Urdu verses (a marked Lucknow influence) into her Thumris, or enliven her renderings by adding shades of khayal and Tappa styles. Descended from a line of reputed singers like Maina Devi, Rajeswari Devi (who had learnt from Moizuddin and Mithailal), Sidheswari Devi was a pupil of Sivaji Maharaj and Bade Ramadasji of Varanasi. Some of the other distinguished exponents of the Poorab style were Badi Motibai (a disciple of Moizuddin), and Rasoolan Bai. Among today's well-known exponents are Mahadev Prasad Misra, Girija Devi, Bagesri Devi, the Misra Bandhus (Amar-nath and Pasupatinath), Ganesh Prasad Misra, Dharamnath Misra and several others. Ustad Bismillah Khan's exquisite renderings on the Shahnai of Poorab ang Thumris, Dadras, Chaitis, Kajaris etc., are as lilting as any vocalist's. So wide is the demand for Thumris that every concert-artiste nowadays (both vocal as well as instrumental) has to come prepared with a few Thumris or Thumri ang gats,

Lucknow Ang Thumri

The Lucknow Thumri also belongs to the Poorab ang, but it is far more ornate than the Banaras ang, and it permits the use of various little ornamentations like *Khatkas*, *murkis*, *taans* etc. Effective Urdu verses *shair* are introduced to support the thought-contents of the songs. Besides the famous Thumri singers already mentioned, there were many other great exponents in Lucknow like Babban Saheb, Begum Akhtar, and a large number of well-trained songstresses in the Nawabi era. Because of their close association with Urdu poetry, they absorbed many Urdu couplets and enriched the *Lucknow ang*. A good background of classical

music training, a rich and resonant voice, a fecund creative imagination, and knowledge of Urdu poetry were some of the assets with which Begum Akhtar "the Queen of Lucknow Thumri, and Ghazals" left her own stamp on the Thumri of Lucknow. Among her many "Shagirds" are Shanti Hiranand, Rita Kothari and others, but it is Shanti who has kept up the pure style of her guru and brings nostalgic memories of the Begum Saheb's music. Shobha Gurtu's voice and style also remind one strongly of Begum Akhtar.

The Punjab ang

The Punjab style is of comparatively recent origin and is quite different from the earlier styles. It is a heavily ornate style, full of quick Tappa-taans, skillful twists and blends from other ragas, and many unpredictable surprises. Ustads Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and Barkat Ali Khan have been the undisputed maestros of this style and to them goes the credit for popularising this difficult and exciting style of Thumri-singing. Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's remarkably well-modulated and pliant voice, his melodious renderings, and the genuine feelings he poured into his singing have made the Punjab ang widely popular today. He has also composed and left for us a large number of lilting khayals and Thumris under the name "Sabrang". Some of the very popular exponents of this style of Thumri (although they are mainly khayal singers) are Salamat and Nazakat Ali of Pakistan, Mohamad Hussain Sarhaung (of Kabul), Dr Vasantrao Deshpande, Sri Jagdish Prasad, Ajoy Chakrabarty, Smt Nirmala Arun, Parween Sultana, Lakshmi Shankar, and some others.

Re-orientation of Themes necessary?

Today the popularity of Thumri has spread to Bengal and Maharashtra too and

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there they are tinged with the local flavour of the folk-styles prevalent there. Thumri in Maharashtra has been influenced by their popular Natyasangeet, while in Bengal, the Punjab and seems to dominate.

A prosaic and cynical critic remarked : —“ In this modern age of supersonic jets, tele-communications, and long distance calls, does it not sound funny and anachronistic to hear the “ Beloved ” wailing and pining for her lover *piya* who has gone to the “ *pardes* ”, or complaining that she feels scared on dark and rainy nights ?”.

Such critics demand a complete reorientation of the old textual contents,

and a thorough substitution of anachronistic themes by more poetic and beautiful ones so that Thumri singers can avoid word-contents bordering on the frivolous, vulgar and cheap.

Thumri, A Bridge between Classical and Light Music.

The development of Thumri alongside the Khayal is a healthy sign because the two together can satisfy the intellectual as well as emotional tastes of listeners. Thumri is called a type of light classical music because it acts as a bridge or link between the light and classical styles of Hindustani music. It “neutralises the technical with the emotional” and therefore, appeals to lovers of both styles.

The Twain Can Meet

By

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Bharata is known as the founder of the present system of Indian music, although subsequent authorities of the art may have further developed it and established different schools of music by introducing innovations through their talents. Since vocal music is the basis of all Indian classical music, language played an important role in the evolution of music in this country.

Indian classical music has developed along two branches called Karnataka and Hindustani. The first one is called the Dakshinadi or Karnataka system which prevails in the South of India and comprises the four linguistic regions of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The other one prevails in the North of

India i.e. Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra, covering nearly three-fourths of the country. In the South, apart from Sanskrit, Kanada, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam are in use.

Common origin

No ancient treatise on Indian music specifically refers to the two branches of Indian music as Hindustani and Karnataka. These two nomenclatures stem from popular usage and have no other literary support. Both the systems have had a common origin, tradition and a technical terminology.

The main stream of Indian music is a constituent of the traditional culture of India, which is one and indivisible, though

due to some variations in language, climate, social environments etc. a superficial demarcation line has been drawn. Throughout the hoary past and up to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there was no such differentiation as the Carnatic and Hindustani music as it is today. Till that period musicians and musicologists of the Southern and Northern regions of India were following the same pattern of music system without any regimental distinction. A few instances of the inseparable musical communion between the Southerners and Northerners may be cited here, which would go to show the oneness of Indian music cultured in the Northern and Southern portions of India.

The Succession of classics

During the reign of the Yadava King Singhana (1210—1247 A.D) the celebrated musicologist Sarangadeva composed his “Sangita Ratnakara”. Though the composition of this work was in South India, the work was recognised as a standard one throughout the country. The illustrious singer Gopal Nayak, who flourished during the 13th and 14th century, was an exponent of the main stream of Indian music though he himself was a Southerner. Simhabhupala, (1390 A.D) the commentator of “Sangita Ratnakara” also belonged to South India.

Kallinatha (1446—1465 A.D) wrote the “Kalanidhi”, a commentary on “Sangita Ratnakara”, inspired by Immadi Deva, son of King Devaraja of Vijayanagar. Many other instances could be cited to show the very close relationship, which existed between the musicians and musicologists of South and North India. The two separate streams viz., Carnatic and Hindustani music, became first marked probably in the 16th—17th Centuries.

The philosopher and musicologist Vidyaranya (14th Century A.D) introduced 15 Janaka ragas and fifty Janya ragas. These innovations created a distinct feature but even then there was no division at the main stream of Indian Music as belonging to a particular region. But it seems that when Ramamatya and Somanatha introduced Mela and Janya ragas on the basis of perhaps Vidyaranya’s classification, a difference came to be noticed in the Indian music system localised in South India.

Venkatamakhi’s Great Contribution

In the seventeenth century A.D., when Venkatamakhi (1637) A.D., drew up the 72 mela ragas, a distinct Carnatic system of Indian music different from North Indian Music came to stay. The introduction of the 72 mela raga system by Venkatamakhi was an epoch making event in the history of Indian music. With the advent of the Trinity Carnatic music got a strong impetus and new directions. During that time the difference between the two systems had become fully marked. So, from the 17th—18th Centuries, the two systems slowly drifted from each other.

Though Carnatic music owes a great deal to Purandaradasa for laying its foundations and further development, it is admitted that South Indian Music attained its full maturity and orientation in the hands of the Trinity. But the cardinal point should not be missed and that is the inherent oneness between the two music systems belonging to the two regions of the Motherland. Like other constituents of the integrated culture of undivided India, the underlying basis of the Carnatic and Hindustani music systems also remains common to both.

Specific Comparisons

So, in spite of the distinctive features which developed between Carnatic and

Hindustani music, there are many interesting points of similarity or kinship between them as both have inherited the common treasure of Indian music from the ancient past. There are similarities between the Dhatu of the Hindustani and Karnatic systems, though their names are different. In the former, the ancient divisions entitled Udgraha, Antara, Sanchari and Abhoga correspond with the Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam, Mukta and Chittaswara etc., of the latter. Dhrupad, Ragamala and alap of Hindustani music are similar to Keertana, Ragamalika and Alapa, though the expression and style may differ. Khayal and Tarana of North Indian music are almost of the same genre as the Krithi and Tillanas of Carnatic music.

Similarity

Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi of Carnatic music bears similarity with Hindustani Khayal in respect of imagination and extempore improvisation more than any other Southern type. The three layas of North Indian music, Vilambit, Madhya and Dhruta are the same in Carnatic music as well. The svaras constituting the melodies are the same in both the systems. But the mode of pronouncing them, the expression is typically Hindustani in Hindustani music and Carnatic in Carnatic music. Considering all these factors we shall have to find out the scope for mutual understanding and appraisal.

Assimilation

The Karnatic music system is very definite, and precise and at the same time, is a veritable mine of harmonies and soul elevating symphonies which are characteristics of Hindu music. Both Carnatic and Hindustani music systems have influenced each other and to mutual advantage. Karnatic music, especially the composers,

have been benefitted by contact with Hindustani music. The examples given below will strengthen this view.

The great composer Muthuswami Dikshitar has incorporated the stately and dignified style of Dhrupad in his compositions. Ragas Yaman Kalyan, Sarang and Kedar were adopted by Dikshitar and the songs "Jambupathe", "Rangapura vihara", "Parimala Ranganatham" were composed. Tyagaraja composed a soulful "Manamuleda" in Amir Kalyani. Muthiah Bhagavathar adopted Sohani raga of Hindustani music and composed "Needu mahima" in Hamsanandi. These ragas have a great deal of appeal to lovers of Carnatic music. Some of the ragas like Behag, Kamach, Bhimpalas, Bagesri and Peelu have been absorbed and songs in these ragas are familiar things nowadays in Carnatic music concerts. Our Hari-kathas abound in songs in these adopted ragas. Many ragas like Desh, Maand, Behag etc have become naturalised. Krithis and Javalis have been composed in these ragas. Tiruppugaz hymns have been set in Sindu Bhairavi raga of Hindustani music.

Desi Ragas

Beautiful traits of Hindustani music have been incorporated into Carnatic music by our Vidwans. Where parallel ragas existed with slight variations, the North Indian character was acknowledged by musicians in South India with the prefix Desiya or Hindustani. Ragas which have been borrowed from the North have, however, acquired a local colouring and a Karnatic complexion and adaptation. Thus Desiya Khamaz represents the Kamaj with the Kakali Nishada. The North Indian Kamaj is seen in South Indian music only from 1870 A.D. onwards. The compositions of Tyagaraja, Swathi Tirunal,

Chinna Krishnadasa and Bhadrachala Ramadasa are all in upanga raga and take only the Komala Nishada. The composers of Javalis introduced the Kakali Nishada. We have Karnatic Kaphi and Hindustani Kaphi. Carnatic Kaphi is a upanga raga whereas Hindustani Kaphi takes Kakali Nishada, Komal dhaivata and Antara gandhara as foreign notes. Jinjhoti of Hindustani music takes Komala gandhara. The moving Javali, "Sakhi Prana", is composed in this raga. But Senjurutti is a South Indian raga and does not take the Komala gandhara. Anayya ("Sharanu Sbaranu"), Tyagaraja ("Rama Rama") and Bhadrachala Ramadasa ("Kamala Nayana") have composed in this raga.

Diffusion—Hindusthani to Karnatak

Desadi Tala which came from Maharashtra was adopted by Tyagaraja and many Krithis were composed in this. Abhangas of Tukaram and Bhajans of Meerabai, Surdar and Kabirdas are extensively sung in the Bhajanas of South India. Ashtapadis of Jayadeva are well known and sung throughout South India, but they are rendered in South Indian ragas. Some of them are sung in Vasantha and Panthuvrali ragas which are common to both systems of music. Mahratta Keertans were adopted during the 19th century and modern Kalakshepams were moulded and evolved on that pattern.

Some of the plucking techniques, characteristics of the sitar, have been skillfully adopted by some performers on the veena of South India. Modern Karnatic musicians have adopted a style of singing and playing on instrumental music which has a good deal of the Hindustani facet in it.

All these underline the fact that though each system has its own peculiarities and

special features, some features could be absorbed by each other for mutual benefit.

The analytic treatment and expression of music in the Carnatic system and synthetic treatment and expression of music of the Hindustani system should come together and an artistic expression of music which will be accepted and appreciated all over India could perhaps be evolved.

The Reverse Way

Ustad Aman Ali Khan, son of Chajju Khan of Moradabad has composed some songs in Hindi in the ragas of Karnatic music. Probably he was influenced by Pandit Bhatkande. He has composed a Jugal Bandi (parallel composition) of "Vatapi Ganapathim Bhajeham" the famous song in Hamsadhani and his pupils have made it quite popular. The ragas Hamsadhvani, Keeravani, Abhogi, Bilahari, Charukesi are now common in the Hindustani system of music. Attempts have been made to introduce the popular Carnatic form of music viz., "Varnam" into Hindustani music.

Plain Vs. Graced Note

Next, we may consider other important features of both the systems. In Hindustani music more emphasis is laid on the rendering of plain and clear notes. But in Karnatic music, more emphasis is given to the rendering of graced notes. Raga alapana in Hindustani music is commenced in a very slow tempo and both the melody and tonality are appealing. But in Carnatic music, embellishments and engravings are introduced almost from the very beginning of the Alapana. Carnatic musicians will do well to imitate the Hindustani style of raga development, at least during the initial stage of alapana,

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Entry of Artificial Features

Unlike Carnatic music, excepting Bhajans and Dhrupads, texts or sahityas of most Khayals and Thumri's are short, lacking in theme and not elevating. The latter-day overemphasis on compositions in Carnatic music concerts (as contrasted with Hindustani music) gives an opportunity to immature musicians to render pieces of all sorts of composers and makes them keen only on maximising their repertoire, rather than cultivating their tone and improving the emotional and artistic appeal of their singing. Number mars quality. The uniqueness of Carnatic music lies in its wealth of compositions. It can be an asset in the hands of a mature and developed artist but it can also be a sore temptation to the junior and imperfect musician merely to fill up the concert.

The undue emphasis on svara—singing which has come into increasing vogue during the last 15 years or so has much to do with interfering with the free flow of the tone and manodharma—which has a free play in Raga singing and in “Tana” as in Hindustani music. Tana singing is more helpful to the tone and more melodic than svara singing, for

consonants break up the free flow of the voice which the sonants (vowels) admit of and to that extent interfere with the free tone. Elaborate svara singing has not only interfered with voice quality but has largely contributed to make Carnatic music often more mechanical and time-filling too.

Many musicians who had celebrated voices were reputed to have observed the strictest continence in their diet and their personal lives. The late Mahavaidyanatha Iyer is a classic example of such a “Gandharva Shareera”, due to such “Tapas”.

Music as the Welder

Carnatic and Hindustani music system are the off shoots of one parent system and shine now as two full fledged sub-systems. Sympathetic understanding, appreciation and assimilation of the adherents of one system by the other would help in the healthy development of the art and give immense pleasure to the listeners. It is music that is really going to weld India as one political whole and promote genuine “All India Consciousness” among the peoples of this country.

Thyagaraja Ghanaraaga Pancharathna Kirtanulu—A literary Appreciation

By

E. N. PURUSHOTHAMAN

Let me first of all confess to the indulgent readers that this translation of Pancharathna Keerthanalu is beyond my depths. Any translation is difficult. It needs profound knowledge of both the languages, nay, a profound insight into the genius of both the languages. Then only

translation comes naturally, fluently, and intuitively. Yet, I have ventured on this work out of my love for Thyagaraja. This is meant only for those who know even less than me. Not for the learned, who know more and much more. Translation of Sanskrit into English seems to be all the

more difficult, because of the samaasams (compounds). So. I admire and adore those great translators, like Edwin Arnold, Ralph Griffith, Monier Williams and Arthur Ryder, and treat them as Brahma Rishis.

“Samaasams”

Telugu is fifty percent Sanskrit and, hence, Telugu also abounds in Samaasams. Thyagaraja has used Samaasams freely. Some of them run into a whole line, almost. Even reading them as prose is a verbal exercise. For translation, they are often puzzling and frustrating, as the English language does not lend itself to such multiple compounds. It is impossible for a man like me to capture the purport and the spirit of the original. On the other hand, at every step, I feel I am spoiling the original. But into those staggering Samaasams, Thyagaraja has infused celestial music and turned them into ambrosial sweets, as food for the Gods. What a wonder!

Poetry

The Pancharathana Keerthanalu are also masterpieces of descriptive poetry. “Jagadhaanandhakaraka” seems to flow in a frenzy. The only way to describe this is to describe it in the words of Thyagaraja himself: “Naamakusumamulache Poojinche Narajanmame Janmamu Manasaa”.

How to translate “Naamakusumamulache”? Naama means name. Kusumamulu means flowers. Che means with. With name flowers, is the straight literal translation. But that is palpably absurd. Only that man who recites your names

like offering flowers is ‘fit to be called a man. That is what Thyagaraja says, so succinctly. While performing pooja the devotee drops flowers at the feet of the deity, one by one, in rhythm with his chant. Archana. Thyagaraja says Lord’s names themselves should be offered in this manner as flowers. There is so much in this deceptively simple compound. Janmamu here is not birth, here it is a being. Narajanmamu, means human being, not human birth. Again, “human being” sounds so flat before “narajanmamu”.

The aim of this translation is only to convey the meaning of the Keerthanalu to the lovers of Thyagaraja. Those who want to enjoy their literary splendour should savour it in the original. There is no other go. For attempting this translation there is one small thing in my favour. Telugu is my mother tongue and also my second language. But, in truth, that is nothing. I have discussed the meanings of these Keerthanalu, quite minutely, with Prof. Diwaakarla Venkataavadhaanulu, who is an outstanding scholar both in Sanskrit and Telugu. But I alone am responsible for all omissions and commissions. The text is taken from “Thyagaraja Keerthanalu”, edited by the late Prof. Vissa Appa Rao and published by Andhra Gaanakala Parishat, Rajahmundry, with meanings and commentaries by Sri Kalluri Veerabhadra Saastry. The meanings and translations I have offered are based on Brown’s Telugu—English Dictionary, which has been my companion in these efforts.

THE SONG

Jagadhaanandhakaaraka Jaya Jaanakipraananaayaka
Gaganaadhipasathkulaja Raajaraajeswara
Sugunaakara Surasevya Bhavyadhaayaka Sadhaa Sakala
Amarathaarakanichayakumudhahitha Paripoornaanagha
Surasurabhooja Dadhipayodhivaasaharana
Sundharatharavadhana Sudhaamaya Vachobrundha Govindha
Saanandha Maavaraajaraaptha Subhakaraaneka

“Ja”

“Ja”

“Ja”

Nigamaneerajaamruthajaposhaka Nimishavairi
Vaaridhasameerana Khagathuranga Sathkavi hrudhalaya
Aganitha Vaanaraadhipa Nathaangriyuga

“Ja”

Indhraneelamani Sannibha paghana Chandrasooryanayanana
prameya Va

Geendhra janaka Sakalesa Subhranagendhrasayana samana-
vairisannutha

“Ja”

Paadhavijithamounisaapa Savaparipaala Varamanthra grahanalola
Paramasaanthachiththa janakajaadhipa sarojabhava varadhaakhila
Srushtisthithyamthakaaraka Amithakaamithappaladha

“Ja”

Asamaanagaathra
Sacheepathisuthaabdhimadhahara Anuraagaraagaraajitha-
Kathaasaarahitha

“Ja”

Sajjanamaanasaabdhisudhakara Kusumavimaana Surasaaripu-
karaabja

Lalithacharana Avagunaasuraganamadhaharana Sanaathanaa-
janutha

“Ja”

Omkaarapanjarakeera Purahara Sarojabhava Kesavaadhiroopa
Vaasavaripu Janakaanthaka Kalaadhara Kalaadharaaptha
Ghrunaakara

Saranagathajanapaalana Sumanoramana Nirvikaara
Nigamasaarathara

“Ja”

Karadruthasarajaalasura Madhaapaharanaavaneesura suraavana
Kaveenabilajamouni Kruthacharithrasannutha Sri Thyagaraja-
sannutha

“Ja”

Puraanapurusha Nruvaraathmajaasrithaparaadheena Kharavi-
raadharavana

Viraavana Anagha Paraasaramanoharaavikrutha Thyagaraja-
sannutha

“Ja”

Aganithaguna Kanakachela Saalavidhalana Arunaabhasamaa-
charana

Apaaramahimaadhbutha Sukavijanahruthsadhana Suramuni-
ganavitha

Kalasneeramidhijaaramana Paapaganrusimha Varathayaga-
raajaadhinutha

“Ja”

O giver of delight to the world, be victorious, beloved
spouse of Jaanaki

“Ja”

TRANSLATION

Scion of exalted solar race, king of kings paramount,
Giver of good qualities, worshipped by the dhevas, best-
ower of auspiciousness, perpetual giver of delight to all
the worlds.

For the dhevaas who are like clusters of stars, you are like the moon,
You are the Kalpavruksha for them, dowered with a dwelling on the milky ocean,
With an enchanting countenance, with speech soaked in nectar,
O Govinda

Bound with bliss, Lord of Lakshmi, O Ageless One, giver of happiness to the devotees, O giver of delight to several worlds.
You are the Sun or the Lotus of Vedhas, for the clouds of the enemies of the Dhevas you are the very wind,
Moulder of Garuda, dweller in the hearts of great poets,
Your feet are adored by countless Vaanara chiefs,

With a body equal to the sapphire in splendour, with the sun and moon as eyes,
O Immeasurable one,

Begetter of Brahma, Lord of the universe, reposing on the silver coloured king of snakes, revered by Siva, the foe of Yama

Who reversed with his feet the curse of a rishi, defender of Yajnas, a reveller in grasping the secrets of dreadful mantras,
With mind filled with supreme peace, Lord of Janaka's daughter, gratifier of Lakshmi's wishes, O giver of delight to all the worlds.

Creator, protector and destroyer, fulfiller of limitless desires, with a peerless figure,

Vanquisher of the pride of Vaali and Samudra, lover of scriptures narrating love, love divine, wrapt in melody

Moon for the ocean of the mind of the virtuous, rider of a floral chariot,

Whose feet are caressed by the lotus hands of Hanuman, the enemy Surasa,

Annihilator of the pride of the evil minded dhaanava hordes,
O Eternal One, Worshipped by Brahma.

A parrot in the cage of Omkara, with the forms of Siva, Brahma and Vishnu,

Destroyer of the father of the enemy of Indra, adorned with all the arts, loved by Siva, embodiment of compassion,

Saviour of those who had sought your mercy, O changeless One, the finest essence of the Vedhas.

With a bunch of arrows held in hand, destroyer of the pride of dhaanavas, protector of the brahmanas and dhevas,
Lauded in the story penned by that holy born prince of poets, praised by Sri Thyagaraja

" Ja "

" Ja "

" Ja "

" Ja "

" Ja "

" Ja "

O Ancient One, off-spring of a great ruler of men, subservient to those who seek refuge, slayer of Khara, Viraadha and Raavana,

O sinless One, you are like fire for your enemies, captivator of the mind, changeless, revered by the great Thyagaraja

" Ja "

Abode of countless qualities, clad in robes of gold, splitter of the Saala trees, with feet glowing like the rosy dawn,
Of infinite and marvellous grandeur, denizen of the hearts of great poets, friend of dhevas and munis,

Beloved of the ocean born Lakshmi, Narasimha for the elephant hordes of sin, adored by the great Thyagaraja and others

" Ja "

Meaning

Jagath. The world 'aanandha' shines on two planes. On the lower plane it is delightfulness or joyousness. On the higher plane it is blissfulness. Sat, Chit, Aanandha. In "Jagadhaanandhakaaraka" it is joyousness, because there cannot be blissfulness for the whole world. It has not been so far. There is ofcourse the concept of universal happiness. Loka Kalyanam. But it has remained only an ideal and an aspiration. Many of our ideas are only aspirations, not realisation. Bliss is the attainment of the individual soul. Here, Thyagaraja means that Rama's figure was so entrancing that he radiated universal joy. Kaaraka : Causer or creator.

Gagana : sky, adhipa : lord, Sathkula : good family. Ja : born. Born of the noble solar race. Soorya vamsa. Raaja Rajeswara. Kara : giver. Sugunakara : giver of good qualities. Sura : dhevas. Sevy : worshipped. Worshipped by dhevas. Dhaayaka : giver, Bhavya : Subham. I don't find an equivalent to Subham in English. Sadhaa : always. Sakala : all. Perennial source of happiness for all the worlds. Sadhaa sakala jagadhaanandhakaaraka.

amara : dhevas, tharaka : star, nichaya : assemblage, Kumudha : water

lilly, Ku : earth. mudha : delight, giver of delight to earth, hitha : friend, Kumudha-hitha : friend of Kumudha, moon. pari everywhere, paripoorna : completely full, agha : sin, anagha : sinless, sura : dhevas, bhooja : tree, surabhooja : kalpavruksha. dadhi : curd, payodhi : ocean, vaasa : dwelling, hara : theft, dowry for daughter and son-in-law, payodha : milk, water. One well-known commentator has translated this as "stealer of milk and curd". But Prof. Venkatavadhanulu says, since payodhi means ocean, the text should be either as "dadhiharana" and "Payodhivaasa" or "Payodhivaasa" and "Dadhiharana" which means stealer of curds and dweller on the ocean.

Sundara, Thara is a comparative degree meaning 'more beautiful.' Vadhana : countenance, sudha : nectar, maya : suffused, vacha : words, brundha : group, Sa : with, aanandha : bliss. Ma : Lakshmi, vara : husband, ajara : imperishable, aaptha : near and dear ones, subha : good, kara : doer, doer of good to dear and near ones.

nigama : vedhas. neeraja : water born, lotus, amruthaja : water born, poshaka : protector, Soorya, is the friend of lotus, like Chandra is the friend of lily, animisha : dhevas, Vairi : foe. Vaaridha : cloud,

sameerana : wind, one who destroys the enemies of the dhevas just as the wind disperses the clouds, Khaga : bird, thuranga : mount, Garudavaahana, hrudh, heart, aalaya : abode, Sathkavi, Sath means true, good, virtuous, excellent, best venerable, respectable, pure and holy. None of these adjectives are so suitable for a poet. So, we may say great poets. God abides in the hearts of great poets. This reminds us of the great words of a great poet. Pothana says in one of his invocatory verses in Bhagavatham. "Palikedadhi Bhagavathamata Palikinchi Vibhudu Ramabhadhrumdata". "I am supposed to be writing Bhagavatham, but it is Lord Ramabhadra who is really writing it." Aganitha : countless, vaanara, adhipa : chief, natha : worshipped, angri : feet Yuga : pair, whose feet are worshipped by countless vaanara chiefs.

Indhrancelamani : the blue stone, one of the nava - rathnams, sannibha : like, resembling, apaghana : body, Rama's body was as charming as the sapphire, aprameya : immeasurable, vageendhra janaka : begetter of Brahma, Sakala : all, eesa : lord, Sakalesa : Lord of the universe, Subra : white, bright, Naagendhra, sayana Aadhi Sesha on whom Lord Vishnu is reposing is of white colour. May be of snowy or silvery colour. Samana : Yama, Vairi : foe, that is Lord Siva, sannutha : revered, revered by Lord Siva, that is, Rama.

Paadha, Vijitha : conquered, overcome, triumphed. Here it should be taken as released, as Ahalya was actually released from Gauthama's curse. Ahalya saapa vimochana. Sava : yajna, paripaala : protector, vara is frequently used by Thyagaraja as a superlative whenever he wishes to emphasize or exalt anything, manthra, grahana : grasping, lola : en-

joying, who enjoyed grasping the secrets or mysteries of the powerful manthras which Visvamitra taught him. Paramasaantha, chiththa, with sublime tranquility of mind, janaka, ja : born, Janaki, adhipa : lord, Jaanakipathi, Saroja : lotus, bhava : dwelling, dwelling in lotus, it may be Brahma or Lakshmi, varadha : giver of boons, sakala : all, sakala Jagadhaanandhakaraka, srishti, sthithi, anthah. Kaaraka : doer, amitha : limitless, Kaamitha : desires, Ppala : fruit, dha : giver, gratifier of all desires, asamaana : matchless, gaathra : body, with a body of matchless beauty, sachepathi : husband of Sachi, Indhra, sutha : son, that is, Vaali son of Indhra, abdhi : ocean, madha : pride, hara : destroyer, destroyer of the pride of Vaali and Samudhra. Prof. Venkatavadhanulu says it should be "Sachi Pathi Nutha" instead of "Sachi Pathi Sutha". Nutha means worshipped, worshipped by Indhra. Because Vaali and Samudhra did not get the same treatment from the hands of Rama, as the text makes out. Vaali was killed, while Samudhra was only snubbed. That is why the Professor remarked like this. anuraaga : love, not sensual, but universal love, raaga : melody, raajitha : adorned, embellished, illumined. Here, I would say it is ennobled, love ennobled with rakthi. Katha : story, saara : essence, hithamu : good, beneficial, friendly, kind. Here it means, lover of stories ennobled with love and music. I don't know whether there is any basis for this in the Vaalmeeki Ramayana!

sajjana : good people, maanasa : mind, abdhi : ocean, sudha : nectar, Kara : giver. You are like the moon for the ocean of the minds of good people, Kusuma : flower, vimaana : chariot. Surasa was the demon that hindered Hanuman when he crossed the sea to go to Lanka, ripu : enemy, Kara : hands, abja : lotus, Laalithamu : coaxed,

wheedled, loved, here it is caressed, whose feet are caressed by the lotus hands of Hanuman, avaguna : evil minded, sura : raakshasaas, gana : crowd, madha : pride : hara : destroyer, sanaathana : eternal, Aja : Brahma, nutha : worshipped, worshipped by Brahma.

Omkaara. Panjara : cage, Keera : parrot, Pura : Thripuraasuras, hara : destroyer, that is Siva, sarojabbava : brahma, bhavamu : dwelling, one who dwells on lotus, Kesava : Vishnu, aadhi : etcetera. roopa : form, of the form of Siva, Brahma and Vishnu. vaasava : Indhra, vasu : wealth, Indhra is the Lord of wealth, ripu : enemy, Vasavaripu : enemy of Indhra, that is Indrajit, Janaka : father, that is Raavana, father of Indrajit, anthaka : destroyer, Kala : art, dhara : wearer. There are 64 arts in our cultural tradition. Rama is an embodiment of all these arts. Kala also means a phase of the moon. Hence, the second Kaladhara is Siva, who wears the crescent moon on his forehead, aaptha : friend, friend of Siva, that is Rama. ghruna : favour, grace, mercy. kara : giver, sarana : refuge, aagatha : gained, obtained, one who has sought refuge. jana : people, paalana : protector, su mano ramana, nirvikara : changeless, migama : vedha, saara : essence thara : very, very essence of the vedhas.

Kara : hand; dhrutha : held, sara : arrow, Jaala : bunch, asura, madha, apaharana : destroyer, avani : earth, sura : dhevas, that is, bhoosura, brahmana, sura : dhevas, avana : protector. protector of brahmanas and dhevas, Kavi, ena : lord, Kaveena : prince of poets, bilamu : hole, ja : born, mouni : rishi, the muni born from a hole, Vaalmeeki.

Puraanapurusha, nru : human beings, vara : exalted, exalted among men, Dasaradha, aathmaja : offspring, aasritha :

those who had sought refuge, paraadheena : subject to others, the Lord becomes the possession or property of his devotees, Khara, Viraadha, Raavana, viraavana : slayer, the literal meaning of Raavana is one who afflicts or injures, hence viraavana, slayer of Khara, viraadha and Ravana, anagha : sinless. One commentator has translated Paraasara Manohara as "one who had delighted Paraasara", the great rishi. I have not heard of any event connecting Rama and Paraasara. Prof. Avadhanulu said that paraasara and manohara are two different epithets. para : enemies, aasura : destroyer, avikrutha : changeless.

aganitha : countless, guna : qualities. Kanaka, chela : robes, saala vidhalana : splitter of saala trees, aruna : red, abha : bright, samaana : equal, Charana : feet, glowing rosy feet like the dawn, apaara : boundless, mahima : greatness, abdhutha : wondrous, marvellous, of boundless wondrous grandeur, sukavi : great poet, jana : people, it means true poets, hruth : heart, sadhana : abode, abiding in the hearts of true poets, sura, muni, gana : assemblage, Vihitha : friend, Kalasa : the sacred vase used for rituals, neeranidhi : ocean, ja : born, ramana : delighter, beloved of the ocean born Lakshmi, paapa, gaja, nrusimha a lion for the elephants of sin.

CONCLUSION

"Jagadhaanandhakaraka" starts with all the grandeur of a towering temple car a ratham, to the accompaniment of Naata, which evokes and sets the tone of solemnity in the atmosphere. To me, who has been out of Madras for more than three decades, Naata has a nostalgic appeal. It rouses in me the still vivid picture of the Brahmothsavam in Srinivasa Perumal Kovil in Egmore, where I was born and brought up over six decades ago. Every night, when Perumal was taken out for procession,

Rattinam, the temple piper, used to commence with Naata, our traditional starter. How appropriate it is that the Pancharathnams also start with Naata, though Jagadhaanandhakaara was not the first Pancharathnam that Thyagaraja had composed. According to late Prof. P. Sambamoorthy it was Saadhinchene.

Like the richly decorated ratham, the song also is engraved with gorgeous carvings and impressive images, which seem to be throbbing with life. Jagadhaanandhakaara, gaganaadhipasathkulaja, amarathaarakanichaya kumudhahitha, sundhara-tharavadhana, sudhaamayavachobrundha, nigamaneeera jaamruthajaposhaka, aganithavaanraadhipa nathangriyuga, padhaviijithamounisaapa, varamanthragrabahalanola, anuraagaraagaraajithakathaasaarahitha, Omkaarapanjarakeera, kalasaneeranidhijaaramana, Karadruthasarajaala, Karaviraadharaavananiraavana, are all living images of Rama, in different forms, recalling different episodes. To change the metaphor, this song is like a garland of words, resonant and resounding. Each samaasam, is like a bouquet. Has he not himself sung "Naama Kusumamulache Poojinche".

Prof. Avadhaanulu says nigamaneeera-jaamruthajaposhaka is an extraordinary compound. Only those who have profound knowledge of Sanskrit can compose such compounds. Sathkulaja, sakalesa, Kaveena, Jamakajaadhipa, nruvaraathmaja, aganithaguna, and kanakachela are fine phrases. Look at the repetitions, sura sura bhooja, anuraagaraaga, kalaadhara kalaadharaaptha and raavanaviraavana.

Prof. Sambamoorthy says that Thyagaraja has aptly chosen Naata, which is

suggestive of Veera rasa, for this piece, which is "heroic praise" of Rama. No doubt the tempo of the song is majestic from start to finish. But the very starting attribute, Jagadhaanandhakaara, describes the lovable nature of Rama as the giver of universal joy. It is this aspect that Thyagaraja reiterates: Jagadhaanandhakaara, sakala jagadhaanandhakaara, aneka Jagadhaanandhakaara and akhila jagadhaanandhakaara. There are both heroic attributes and sathvic attributes, such as sugunaakara, bhavyadhaayaka. saanandha, paramasantha chiththa, sajjana maana-saadbhisudhaakara, ghrunaakara, sarana-gathajanapaalana and sumanoramana. The content of the song is more sathvic while the movement of the song is more majestic. The content seems to be submerged in the movement.

I don't know why Vaalmeeki is called bilajamouni, because he was not born from a hole. When he was doing penance an ant-hill grew over him. But he was born from mud on which Brahma's seed had dropped at a weak moment.

After posting this script to the Editor, I happened to meet a friend of mine, who is a Sanskrit Professor, and raised this question of bilajamouni with her, not expecting any plausible answer. But pat came her answer, that only after the ant-hill had grown over him, did Vaalmeeki become a mouni, before that he was only a hunter. Therefore he can be called a bilaja mouni. This is indeed a brilliant explanation and quite convincing and exciting too! These are the unexpected rewards for literary labours! God bless her!

Seminars are drawing audiences

(From a Correspondent)

Elitism inevitable

Although the seminar set out to discuss why classical music does not seem to draw audiences any more, what emerged at the end was the unanimous agreement that 'high quality art, of any kind, has necessarily to have an element of elitism in it', and that the state of classical music cannot be judged by the number of listeners in comparison to those after light or film music. For, just as one cannot conclude that Shakespeare is 'dead' and finished because all the youngsters are reading comics, so also one cannot conclude that classical music is dead because many people prefer light music to classical.

The proper yardstick

Far from bemoaning the lack of 'popular' interest in classical music, the participants, both artistes and musicologists, pointed out that numbers cannot be a measure of the popularity of the art, and that there are, indeed, more people exposed to and having access to, classical music (through radio, records, tapes etc.) today than was the case decades ago. As long as there are even a handful of serious practitioners of classical music who have attained a measure of proficiency, it can be kept alive, and will thrive.

It is a mistaken premise, it was pointed out by the speakers, to assume that classical music should set out to attract or please the *hoi polloi*, the way that film music does.

In fact, belying the organisers' fears, the seminar not only managed to draw a

The Sur Singer Samsad's Kal-ke-Kalakar sammelan has been an annual event on the cultural calendar of Bombay for more than twenty years. Meant solely to give a platform every year to nearly 50 promising "tomorrow's" artistes who show potential in classical dance and music. It is essentially a one-man-show, seen through by the dedication, enthusiasm and near-fanatical interest of its director, Sri Brij Narain.

A SEMINAR

This year's festival, spread over eight days in December, was noteworthy in one special feature, a Seminar on music in which scholars, musicologists and performing artistes participated for a fruitful exchange of ideas. The deliberations of the seminar came partly as a revelation, in a way, to listeners and performers alike, and this ought to be of interest to music lovers all over India, both in the north and the south.

"Lokruchi"

The topic taken up for discussion was, "Classical music and lokruchi" or the appeal of classical music for the masses. Out of the six speeches and papers read out, including those by Professor Ashok Ranade (of the Department of Music Bombay University, who presided over the seminar), Professor Nigam of Kanpur, (who acted as moderator) Pandit K. C. Ginde (a performing musician and scholar) and Mrs. Sakuntala Narasimhan (who spoke on behalf of south Indian audiences as well as artistes), some interesting conclusions emerged as a consensus.

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sizeable audience but also generated sufficient interest to move a member of the audience to come forward and offer his comments on behalf of those assembled.

Performers, Wake Up!

As a representative of the artistes' community, Sakuntala Narasimhan posed some questions on whether performers cannot, on their own, do some soul-searching on the question of poor audience response, and ask themselves questions like : Do I enjoy my own music as a performer? Am I free from all the 'gayaka doshas' that the texts list, or is there scope for improvement? Am I melodious, first and foremost—for that is the ultimate test of aesthetics in music, whether it is classical or light, Occidental or Western? Do I have a good voice suited to singing? If not, should I try to be a performer, all the same?

By making self-assessment on these lines and trying to give of their best, perhaps artistes can do their bit for ensuring that interest in classical music does not flag or wither in the coming generations.

More Art, Less Grammar Please

The seminar went on to put forward some suggestions that might make for greater interest in classical music, particularly among the younger generation. These included a proposal to make use of imaginative and modern methods, to make music more interesting in the beginning stages. Although attempts have been made to 'make science meaningful' or 'history meaningful', no such efforts have been made with music. Also, accent should be more on the entertainment and enjoyment aspects of music, rather than the mere grammar of it, so that youngsters do not find it boring. Besides, greater effort should be made at the school level to inculcate a healthy interest in classical music by including it in the curriculum.

The Samsad proposes to publish the views expressed in the papers read out at the seminar, so that the suggestions could be implemented. The quality of participation and interest in the seminar augurs well for similar attempts in the future, not only for discussions in general but also technical and musicological aspects, for the spreading and enrichment of the art in coming years.

Musicians and Kings of Classical Music

By

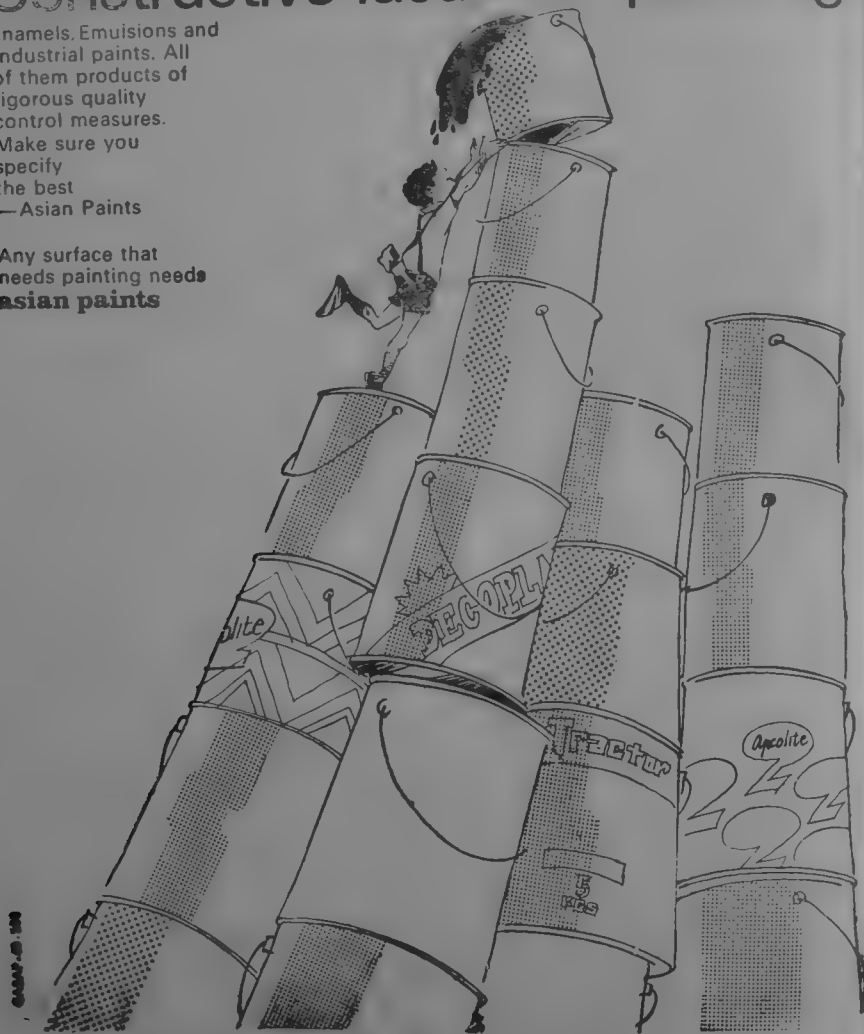
K. S. MAHADEVAN

The world will be a happier place to live in, according to Plato, if kings were philosophers and philosophers were kings. The Greek philosopher was not musically inclined, as we all know. Otherwise with equal truth, he could have said that when kings were musically interested and musicians were kings, it would

have been conducive to a happier world. History abounds in instances of that proposition. In Europe, during the 17th and 18th centuries when the great musicians like J.S. Bach, Haydn, Mozart etc. were sustaining their genius on music, they depended not only for their mere livelihood but also for the flowering of their musical

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The Rajput princes, the Vijayanagar Emperors, the Peshwa and Nayak kingdoms of the South, the Ruling Princes of Travancore since Maharaja Swati Tirunal's days, the Maharajas of the former Mysore State and even the chiefs of principalities like Pudukkottai, Ettayapuram, Sivaganga,

The Ambassadors of Music

The system of maintaining *Asthana* *Vidwans* at each court or *darbar* and organising periodically a *Sadas* of prominent *Vidwans* from their own courts as well as from other *darbars*, helped considerably in cross-fertilisation of ideas and techniques. Imagine these grand spectacles : *Vadivelu* and his brothers taking the quintessences of *Karnatic* music to *Trivandrum*, *Govinda Marar* ("Shatkala Marar") bringing in a new dimension of singing to *Tanjore Court* in the form of both *Ati Vilamba* and *Ati drut* speeds of singing, *Kshetragna* weaving hundreds of soulful melodies at the *Tanjore Court*, *Tamil Nadu* veterans like *Harikesa vanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar* being invited to *Mysoore Darbar* on musical missions like renovating *Purandara's* *Kritis* and last but not least, the numerous *Hindi*, *Arabic* and foreign musicians gathered by *Swathi Tirunal* around him to create the right atmosphere for creativity, eclecticism and practice—all these musical cross-currents point to the conscious striving on the part of all concerned to master the forms and content of systems of music other than their own. The window in the South has always been open to musical breezes from other centres.

Can one imagine a more artistically stimulating atmosphere than the courts of Serfoji Maharaja at Thanjavur or Swathi Tirunal Maharaja? The Maharatta rulers at Tanjore themselves became composers and writers of brilliant commentaries on classical treatises of Carnatic music. Tulajendra's "Sangeetha Saramita", Vidyaranya's "Sangithasara" and Venkatamakhi's "Chaturbali Prakashika" (formulating the 72 melakarta ragas) all belong to the memorable series of high patricians' efforts to master Sangitha Sastra.

Ayilyam Tirunal

We find that Maharaja Ayilyam Thirunal, who succeeded Swathi Tirunal and who more than others kept up the elevating musical atmosphere at his court, was himself a highly-rated vocal musician, with a voice of high Sruti and great melody. The redoubtable Coimbatore Raghava Iyer, famous for his raga alapana of gigantic conception and execution, his swara singing, grasp of laya, who wrung admiration from no less a person than the great Veena Dhanammal, was the star of Ayilyam Tirunal's durbar. Mahavaidyanatha Iyer stayed for two months at the court and many were the friendly duels promoted between these two giants at the durbars, with the Maharaja sometimes being—yes—an umpire on technical matters!

An indication of the mustard-keen musical atmosphere that Ayilyam Tirunal Maharaja maintained at his court is provided by the report of two colourful happenings at his Sadas. Vidwan Raghava Iyer was singing at the durbar before a very select audience of musicians and important personages. Raghava Iyer went on to sing Subbaraya Sastri's famous Kriti in Ritigowla "Janani

Ninnuvina" and had just sung the Chittaswara composed by the composer himself.

The Test

When the Kriti was over, the Maharaja intervened and gave a poser to Vidwan Sri Raghava Iyer, viz., that the Vidwan should, in a matter of minutes, compose another Chittaswara, in lieu of Subbaraya Sastri's, which while achieving striking creativity, should have the same raga bhava, structure and rakti as Subbaraya Sastri's—a tall order indeed. But the doughty Raghava Iyer's *swaragnana* was equal to the test. In a few minutes, he composed and sang not one but three different Chittaswaras to take the place of the original—and both the Maharaja and his brilliant galaxy of musicians were stunned!

The above incident is fully authenticated by no less a celebrity than Mahavaidyanatha Iyer's Sishya, the late Vasudevanallur Subbiah Bhagavathar who was himself a giant in Pallavi singing and whose diaries are a faithful record of the great musical events at the end of the last century. Subbiah Bhagavathar's decision to keep diaries in a land of oral and aural transmission for music is so modern!

On another occasion, Maharaja Ayilyam Tirunal desired to hear a detailed raga alapana of Huseni raga by Mahavaidyanatha Iyer. The latter commenced the raga with the chord "Ni dha Nee Sa - Sa Ni Sa Ri Sa Ni" and went on elaborating it exhaustively for almost an hour. When he finished, the Maharaja complimented Mahavaidyanatha Iyer warmly for departing from the normal start of "Sa Sa Pa - Ni dha ma - pa ni dha ni sa" etc. etc. Then the Maharaja himself tuned up his thambura

at a high sruti and in his thin, melodic voice, rendered Huseni alapana for many minutes, to the amazement of all the Vidwans and other personages present. It is on record that this Raja could render ragas like Saindavi, Ahiri, Dwijavanthi, Atana, Suruti, Manji, Paras etc, with fluid ease and impeccably. How many of our present day Vidwans could stake such a claim? Small wonder that the assembled Vidwans accepted him as one of themselves, with an extraordinary flair for music.

Mahavaidyanatha Iyer humourously remarked on the above occasion that he and his fellow Vidwans were very fortunate that Ayilyam Tirunal was a Maharaja and not a professional musician and that, with his towering knowledge and fine voice, he

would have made it difficult for Vidwans like himself to survive. We may be sure that Mahavaidyanatha Iyer did not wish to indulge in mere flattery because from his exalted position in music, he had no need for it. His extraordinary capabilities were well known to the Maharaja and the whole world. His music was illumined by the "Seven Lamps", viz., Srutisudda, rasapradhana, layasuddha, sampradayika, sahitiasudda, jamakalamkarashobita and anandamaya. Our musical history never had a greater exponent than this great austere Saivite who was a master of Puranas and sastras, could give a Harikatha recital at a pinch and whose music was simply an offering to the Gods above. He was also a fine composer and to this day his Kriti "Sri Sankara Guru" in Nagaswarali raga remains unsurpassed.

Dance—Indian Genius

By

Smt. KOMALA VARADAN

Writing about ballet, Irving Howe once wrote "why does one ballet seem better than another and what do we mean here by 'better'? What is the relation between motion and emotion? Do ballets have meaning other than the trivial fact that some "tall stories....."

Dance is motion—movement to a rhythm. Since time immemorial people have danced. Danced in the sense that they have conveyed ideas through gestures and body movements—like motioning some one to come or leave, to give or take away, to threaten by use of a closed fist etc. The sign language preceded the spoken language.

Man has always expressed his emotions through motion. Success makes him leap

in joy, rage makes him stamp and thump, fear makes him shrink and glide away etc. Dance has also been the mode of expression of the joys of the community all over the world. Whether it was a marriage or victory in war, the community celebrated it with dance.

These basic urges, actions and reactions constituted the fundamentals of dance when it grew into an art form. Indian dance traces its mythological origin to Siva who beats his drum and sets the rhythm for nature, universe and man.

"Our Lord is the Dancer, who like the heat latent in firewood diffuses His power in mind and matter and makes them dance in their turn".

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Body is the instrument of the dancer. As a Vainika uses the Veena to pour out melody, as a painter uses the brush and the canvas to convey his motifs, the dancer uses her body to express herself. Western art, whether it is sculpture or dance, generally emphasises human anatomy in terms of muscular build-up. Indian art lays stress on the movements and positions of individual parts of the body. Bharata's Natya Sastram which details at great length Angas, Pratyangas and Upangas describes the various movements possible for the different parts. Only to give an idea—there are nine different movements for the head, eight glances, four neck movements, twentyeight single hand (asamyutha) gestures and 23 combined double hand (samyuta) gestures, various standing poses (Sthanaka), movement of the feet and legs (Chari), leaps (Utplavana), gaits—their description and uses are all outlined in great detail. Movements are prescribed even for minor parts like the eyelids, eyebrows, cheeks, shanks and heels. The intricate study of the possibilities and the interpretative analysis are indeed amazing.

The Difference

Then, there is differentiation between pure dance and dance with a theme. Whereas pure dance is more or less ornamental, dance with a theme is more comprehensive. Bharata says that dance is made up of Rasa, Bhava, Abhinaya, Dharmi (Conventions), Vritti (style), Pravritti (regional influences), Siddhi, Swara (music), Atodya (orchestral support), Gana (vocal) and Ranga (stage). To quote from the chapter on Rasavikalpa:

"Rasa Bhava Abhinaya Dharma Vritti-pravrittaya : Siddhi Swarastathatodyam Ganam Rangascha Sangraho :"

How to categorise Indian dance? Is it a combination of steps, gestures and music? It is in fact all these and more. What distinguishes it from other dances including ballet is the important role the face and the eyes play. When the body assumes the posture and the hands depict the appropriate Mudra pertaining to the theme, the face and eyes reflect the inner feelings and emotions of the character portrayed. For example, in the sequence of Yasoda calling child Krishna, the body would be slightly bent forward and the hands extended in the manner of inviting—these alone will not be sufficient. The face will have to reflect the affectionate invitation while the eyes should gleam in fondness and pride.

Unique

In my many trips abroad, I have not seen this being emphasised in any other dance form. Even countries like Thailand and Cambodia (Kampuchea) where there have been very strong influences of Indian art forms, where the themes for the dances are still drawn from Indian epics and mythology and their dance is acknowledged to have stemmed from Bharata's art, the face has ceased to play the role that it does in India and remains a pleasant mask with a static expression. It is important and will be of interest to note here that in Thailand's School of Dramatic Arts in Bangkok, there is a mask of Bharata who is worshipped as the creator or originator of the art of dance. Similarly, there is another mask for Narada who is worshipped as the creator of music. At the entrance itself there is a huge Ganesha figure with a majestic smile welcoming us. There is also a figure of Saraswathi overlooking the courtyard. In that School we are told that all the hand gestures and the various poses are meant to convey specific meanings. But

over the years the real significance has been forgotten though by tradition the technique of the movements has continued in form though the substance is missing.

While witnessing the programmes one thus notices that the story or the theme, whether it is from Ramayana or an Apsara dancing is conveyed by a sequence of poses while the musician sings the corresponding lines. All the while the face remains calm and pleasant with a steady expression even though what is depicted may be a sorrowful event or an episode dealing with valour or fear. No doubt, the movements, poses costumes etc. are indeed beautiful and generally convey the idea. But yet the trained Indian eye misses the meaningful expressions on the face. When I demonstrated the depiction of Rasa and Bhava, they were amazed at the range of facial expressions and the telling manner in which emotions are depicted.

Rasa Theory

Rasa theory is the creation of the Indian genius. The analysis of the human mind, the range of emotions that a human being has and the detailed discussion of the manifestation and development of Rasa we find in *Natyasastram* leave us in sheer amazement. Bharata considers Rasa as the most important of all the different aspects of a performance. The temporary identification of the dancer with the character and the portrayal of the theme and the temporary involvement of the spectator with the character and the theme, even though all of them are aware all the time that it is not real but only a depiction, are the direct results of the atmosphere created by Rasa. Thus, through the evocation of Rasa, the aesthetic excellence of dance is greatly enhanced and better rapport with the viewers established. This certainly is the ultimate glory of any performing art, more so dance.

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Cultural Scene in Karnataka

Bangalore

The year 1982 opened with a music conference and festival arranged by the Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat which may be said to be the counterpart of the Music Academy, Madras. Asthana Vidwan Belakavadi Varadaraja Iyengar, heir to a rich musical tradition of this state and a disciple of Gayakasikhamani Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar, presided over the twelfth year's conference and was conferred the title 'Ganakala Bhooshana', at the conclusion of the eight-day sessions.

Academy Sessions

As usual there were the academic sessions in the mornings in which only musicians and musicologists of this state participated. There were four concerts in the evening of short and shorter duration, according to the standing of the artistes involved, in which as many as 80 artistes participated with only 7 of them coming from outside the state. The overall consideration in such an arrangement appeared to be to satisfy the aspirations of as many local musicians as possible. This naturally led to good, bad and indifferent standards in platform experience. While the popular artistes maintained their reputation by and large, a so-called junior concert by four blind artistes is worthy of note. If nature deprived them of sight, it did compensate them by aural sensitivity which enabled them to establish rapport with the audience. B. Doreswami (vocal), S. Gopalakrishnan (violin), Subrahmanyachar (mridangam) and B. L. Lingiah (morsing) performed with gusto and involvement.

While there were lecture demonstrations of different standards in the morning sessions, T. R. Subrahmaniam of Delhi

University spoke about the scope and relevance of *neraval* and 'swarakalpana' in Carnatic music with suitable illustrations, in which he highlighted a rational approach to the subject. R. S. Kesavamurthi, one of the seniormost *vainikas* of the state, gave a detailed account of the arrangements made by the Mysore Rulers in the Palace for musical training under Veena Seshanna, Veena Subbanna and Bidaram Krishnappa to junior musicians.

Temple Music

Sponsored and financially aided by the Central Sangit Natak Academy, there was a two-day Seminar on 'Temple Music tradition in Karnataka' in which an entire day was devoted to the presentation of the various musical instruments used in the Sri Krishna Mutt, Udupi by the members of a troupe which was specially brought over for the purpose. The commentary was given by Srinivasa Udupa. Mukhaveena A. V. Narayanappa played on Nagaswaram the various tunes in vogue (Manirangu, Kedara, etc) in temples from Suprabhatam to Sayanotsavam.

On the second day Sri Rama Bharathi of Melkote gave a graphic account of the musical traditions prevalent in Melkote temple from the times of Sri Ramanujacharya. Dr. R. Satyanarayana also spoke on the subject. With a commentary by Mysore V. Subrahmanya, the temple music tradition of the Manjunatheswara temple at Dharmasthala was presented by a troupe from Dharmasthala. The temple music tradition of Mysore state, with 'Bheri Tadana' was presented by Sringeri Sastri and party. Some other troupes presented

the folksy religious music and instruments associated with the temples for minor deities in villages.

The most awe-inspiring and dramatic feature of the Seminar was the 'Bhootha-radhana' recreation by the Udupi Mela. The spirit-worship tradition in vogue in the west coast of Karnataka was explained by Srinivasa Udupa. The person who donned the special dress of the spirit went into a make-believe trance, involving movements of the body as in 'Delirium Tremens', till he was appeased by the 'devotees'. This was a new experience to Bangalore audience. The seminar brought home two factors. Royal patronage to eminent artistes (in bygone days) was supplemented and sustained by our temples by maintaining certain musical traditions connected with the daily worship of the deities from morning till night. This is how music and dance at the mass level have come down to this day as a tradition, thanks to munificent gifts of land etc., by rich donors/patrons. But with the advance of civilisation and sophistication in the lives of the people, many of these instruments and traditions are going out of currency. It was, however, observed that what was presented in the Seminar was only a cross-section of temple music mixed with rituals.

Tala Demonstration

Vidwan R. Chandra Singh sang a Pallavi in the Simhanandana Tala of 128 counts, reminiscent of what late Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer and others did in the Music Academy, Madras. This and such displays of rhythmic achievements are getting to be of academic interest as they go over the heads of the average audience. The conference president recounted the details of the training he received during his Gurukulavasam under Muthiah

Bhagavathar and how the latter encouraged his disciples to listen to the concerts of leading vocalists of the day and recount to him salient features which appealed to each student. This was treated as part of the training. S. Mukund, a young, musicologist, read a paper on the contribution of Subbarama Dikshitar to Carnatic music. The symposium on the 'role of accompanists in a concert' saw the participants speaking each from his own point of view without reference to well-established norms set by master accompanists of the past generation who became star performers without any aggressive display of virtuosity on their respective instruments.

Dance Styles

H.R. Kesavamurthi, a leading dance master of Bangalore spoke about 'Bharathanatyam traditions in Bangalore' and referred to the inroads made into the minds of the local dance students, by the dance teachers from Madras in recent years. His students, Lalitha Srinivasan and Vasanthalakshmi, rendered a few pieces to represent the Mysore and Tanjore styles in Bharathanatyam. Smt. Nirmala Ramachandran of Madras spoke about the compositional excellence of Ghanam Krishna Iyer's padams and illustrated the same by rendering Abhinayam for two of his padams.

Manchala Jagannatha Rao from Andhra gave an illustrated talk on 'Some krithis of Annamacharya and Tyagaraja in rare ragas'. Smt Padma Murthi read a paper on the 'Prakeernaka Adhyaya in Sangeetha Ratnakara'. Smt B. S. Chandrakala gave an illustrated talk on the compositions of Nijaguna Sivayogi. G. Rangiah of Mysore gave a recital of the Tana paddhathi of his guru Mysore Vasudevachar. Dr. S. R. Siddalingappa read a paper on 'a unified approach in under-

tanding Western and Indian classical music' based on his experience gained while studying in England. The special feature of this year's conference was the importance given to 'Gamaka vachana'—by way of invocation at the commencement of each day's session. Gamaka Vachana or musical renderings from the epics (in Kannada) without accompaniments has a hoary tradition in Karnataka and is patronised by the State Government through the Kannada Sahitya Parishat (Kannada Literary Academy). On the concluding day, in addition to conferring the title 'Gana Kala Bhooshana' on Belakavadi Varadaraja Iyengar, the conference president, felicitatory citations were presented to four veteran musicians: C. Rangaiah (for Musicology), N. Chokkamma (veena and vocal), D. S. Garud (Tabla) and Bhadrakiri Achutadas (Harihara). The attendance at the morning sessions is gradually improving and is a sign of increasing keenness among the public to understand the theory and practice of music and dance for a better appreciation of the arts.

Devi Ashtarasa Malika

While the Chowdiah Memorial Hall is fully engaged for various cultural activities, the new dance feature presented with great devotion by Chitra Visweswaran and her students at this venue during the latter part of January was an impressive one. All the three ingredients Nritta, Nritya and Abhinaya were presented in the programme 'Devi Ashtarasa Malika'—drawing on the lyrical source material available in ancient texts in Sanskrit and Tamil such as Sankaracharya's 'Soundarya Lahari', Kalidasa's 'Kumar Sambhava' and Thiruvilayadal puranam! The whole programme was a terpsichorean panegyric to the mother Goddess as Adi Parasakthi or Rajarajeswari. The

eight disciples presented eight Rasas or aesthetic moods resulting in a continuous stream of visual and aural feast to the audience.

Resurgence of Dramatic art

In recent years a number of amateur drama troupes have replaced the professional ones by substituting socially relevant, progressive and entertaining plays which are different from the puerile mediocrities presented as 'drawing room comedies'. More recently the year-end English theatre festival sponsored by the leading daily 'Deccan Herald', has done a lot to boost the image of Amateur English Theatre and encourage a qualitative and professional approach. After the first festival during December 1980, the second such festival was held during January this year. It was a sell-out with the participation of leading groups like Bangalore Little Theatre, Gnatak, the Bard and Theatre Lab. 'Diary of Anne Frank' by D. and P. G. and 'Hayavadana'—Girish Karnad's masterpiece—staged by Forum 3 were critically acclaimed as the best two plays of this non-competitive theatre festival. Of course the Kannada Theatre movement is revitalised by troupes like Ranga Sampada, Kala Gangotri, Benaka etc. The Central Govt. Industrial undertakings like H.M.T., B.E.L. and I.T.I. hold annual drama competitions to sustain the efforts of these troupes.

Jazz

Suddenly Bangalore has been flooded with a plethora of foreign music groups catering to the elite western music lovers of Rock and Jazz. Apart from a couple of noisy and mediocre rock bands, Bangaloreans were treated to a refreshing dose of original jazz during the past three months by marquee names like Herbie Mann (flute), Billy Taylor (piano), Petrowsky

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Trio, Mc Jad etc. The Jazz concert by 'Sakti' with L. Shankar (double-faced violin), Larry Coryell (guitar), Zakir Hussain (Tabla) and Vinayakaram (ghatam) was the ultimate in Jazz-Carnatic fusion to the delight of the ever-novelty-hungry youth of Bangalore.

A.I.R.'s Contribution

Thanks to the dynamism and imagination displayed by the present station Director, Mr. P. Dharmagnani, the Bangalore station of A. I. R., has launched on a scheme of holding monthly concerts (both Hindusthani and Carnatic) before invited audiences and has also increased the broadcasting time for music, thus enthusing musicians, and music lovers alike. In one such programme held during January, Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi gave a 90 minute concert which turned out to be an object lesson in the concert technique of

balanced selection and presentation of songs maintaining very high standards.

Music and Dance Festival

The Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy, established under Government auspices, is the counterpart of the Tamil Nadu Iyal Isai Manram. It held a nine-day music and dance festival from 14th to 22nd March at the Ravindra Kalakshetra. On the inaugural day 6 leading musicians and dancers of Karnataka received awards for the year 1981-82, consisting of Rs. 5,000/- in cash, a statue of Goddess Saraswathi and a shawl. On the concluding day Finance Minister Veerappa Moily presented a cash award of Rs. 1,000/- a bronze shield and shawl to each of 11 eminent persons for distinguished service in the field of dance and music for the first time. These included Yours Sincerely.

T. B. NARASIMHACHAR

Fine Arts in Kerala

Ernakulam

A great artist creates a world of his own and his audience are proud to live in it. A lesser artist may entice them in for a moment, but soon, he will watch them filling out. But Ajay Chakravarty's vocal music (Hindusthani) has that eternal flow. We are willy-nilly borne on the tide of his exalted music, which touches us in the most sensitive regions of the marrow,

sheer versatility and mellifluousness of his music. Here is a young man of 29 who has taken the music lovers of Cochin by storm. At his young age, he has not only "arrived" as a musician who is *sui generis* but he has also streaked past many veterans in the field.

Almost every member of the large audience that was present to listen to Ajay Chakravarty's concert at the Kerala Fine Arts Hall in February last must have reached home in utter disbelief, wonderment, intoxication and stupefaction at the

From a very young age he showed his latent potential by habitually winning music competitions, awards, encomiums including the coveted national scholarship when he came under the tutelage of that great musician, musicologist and patron of music Sri Gyan Prakash Ghosh, affectionately known in the world of music as just

Gyan Babu. Subsequently, he became the "ganda-bandh" disciple of Ustad Munawwar Ali Khan, the son of one of the all-time greats, Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan.

Now he is a musician-scholar at the Sangeeth Research Academy, Calcutta.

Melody from a maestro

Ajay started his concert with a vilambit khayal in Bhoop (Mohanam). In no time, he had unravelled the grandeur of that raga and established his class and, along with it, the close rapport of the audience. He has cast his mode of singing into the mould of that great maestro, in his voice, in his articulation of swaras, the same remarkable clarity, and sweetness of voice with a purple velvet texture in the lower registers and with the same felicity in the *tarsaptak*. Ajay may be considered to have succeeded incredibly. In his music there is no straining for the unattainable— and hardly anything was. Ajay's "tans" were fast, yet graceful, complex, but full of mastery, the "gamak tans" were neither exaggerated nor misdirected, his "satta (straight) tans" often covered more than than an octave, his "laya alaps", his "bol alaps" (niraval), his "sargams" (swaraprastharas) and his "swarabhedas" came forth in their turbulence.

Just for the sake of record, after the "Bhoop bada and chota khayal", accompanying himself on the harmonium, he changed the tempo and sang a haunting "thumri" in Pilu. (In fact, in the subsequent thumris he sang too, he played the harmonium himself and showed in the process, how adept he is with this instrument),

Thumris

After a brief interval, he sang Malkauns in teen tal madhya laya and drut, followed

by the famous thumri "yad piya ki aye" (Misramand), then another in Bhairavi (Baju bande) and, on the request of an audience reluctant to end this enchanted evening, another famous piece 'Hari Om'.

It was Bade Ghulam Ali Khan who smoothed the jagged edges of the Patiala gharana, refined, distilled and purified it and put his own stamp on it. And it was also his genius that created a different genre of thumri singing different from the Banaras style (Siddheswari Devi) or the Lucknow style (Begum Akhtar). And Ajay showed that he could take on the mantle.

Jyoti Guha's harmonium filled the breach left by the disappearing breed of sarangiys in the North, adroitly.

Samar Saha on the tabla displayed good tekka which few Indian players have today, but many of their counterparts have in Pakistan.

Those fortunate people who heard Ajay Chakravarty then will have his music vibrating in their memory for a long time to come. And those who were not present will never know what they missed.

T. Viswanathan's Flute

The concert artist at the Kerala Fine Arts Society Auditorium on Wednesday night was the renowned flutist T. Viswanathan whose antecedents are *non-pareil*. His family tree is studded with legendary names in the world of music which should confound some genetists.

Amongst Veenai Dhanammal's children—all the four of them vocalists—were Jayammal, the mother of the one and only Balasaraswati, her brothers Ranganathan and Viswanathan, whom we heard earlier in the evening.

T. Viswanathan, therefore, came with this aura. His recital today was also traditional enough in style and structure as well as repertoire to satisfy any purist. His deft fingers showed his mastery, but he was not, alas, the complete flutist, excellent though he may be as a teacher.

Flute being a wind instrument, the blowing is as vital to it, as bowing is to violin. Herein lies his weakness perhaps.

But he made up for this in all aspects of his performance, not the least when he put down his flute and sang in perfect unison with his wife Josepha, the opening lines of Papanasam Sivan's "Kava va" in Varali. His singing style immediately struck a nostalgic chord; it had that slow, gamaka-steeped charm reminiscent of that particular school of music associated with the scions of that family, the *fragrant immortelle*.

The Programme

Viswanathan started off with the Kalyani varnam, Vanajakshi. Then followed Ninnujuchi (Saurashtram), Toliyanma (Bilahari), Tulasidalamala (Mayamalagowla), Vazhimaraithu (Nata kuranji), then Varali, then Nenarunchinanu (Malavi-Thyagaraja), and for elaboration. Sankaracharyam (Sankarabharanam-Dikshitar), the padam in Pantuvarali (Nidrayil), the javali in Kalyani (Enthathi kuluke), a brisk tillana in Hindolam ending with a Tiruppugazh in Jhenjuruti.

Josepha Cormack, in an appropriate Kanjeevaram sari and other embellishments of a traditional South Indian sartorial ensemble, accompanied Viswanathan in the recitative sequences of the various kritis with much aplomb.

Here was another westerner who had succeeded not only in adopting the complex art of Carnatic vocal music but also, it seemed, its ethos.

If Josepha has not passed the litmus test of a full-fledged concert yet, she soon will, with her obvious will.

It may be because of Higgins that the audience today had that *blase* or *deja vu* reaction when listening to this singularly talented American lady.

The accompaniment provided by V. Thiagarajan (violin), Mavelikkara Raju (mridangam) and V. Nagarajan (kanjira) was professional and competent without being outstanding.

Sonal Mansingh

The cultural scene in Cochin seems to have suddenly come alive of late. Last week, it was the Inner Wheel Club of Cochin west which took the initiative and the effort to arrange a dance recital by none other than Smt. Sonal Mansingh, indubitably one of the reigning prima ballerinas in the country today. Even for the cognoscenti, an artiste of the calibre of Sonal Mansingh is like caviar to the epicure. There she was on the stage, resplendent in the classic Bharata Natyam accoutrements, casting an almost incandescent effulgence by a combination of grace, looks, charisma, her incredibly fast footwork and obvious mastery of technique. She could well be the 'bright attired danseuse' of the Rig Veda or the one depicted at Mohanjodaro. She has the necessary pre-requisites of a dancer as laid down in the Abinaya Darpana and would appear to be the quintessence of the Natya Sastra.

Whether it is a musician or a dancer, one unmistakable sign of a great artiste is the impression that one gets that she is giving of her best each time she performs her art. Such artistes are often oblivious of the audience and derive pleasure, not from the applause that follows, but from

the performance itself—the dedication, the invocation, the evocation, and the divine ecstasy realised from it. Balarasawati, Madurai Mani Iyer, Omkarnath Thakur, D. V. Paluskar all had this quality. Today Bhimsen Joshi has it, and Pandit Jasraj is almost attaining it. Asked, after the performance, the mundane questions: “And what did you think of the audience?”, Sonal quietly replied: “Today, I didn’t see anyone”.

Her performance started with a Pushpanjali (Simhendramadhyam and Sindhu Bhairavi), followed by a sequence in a complicated rhythm in 11 matras (Mishra tripata) in the traditional propitiation of Lord Ganesha. The Varnam, to the accompaniment of a ragamalika in five different ‘Ranjani’ ragas was based on the second Canto of the Gita Govinda and provided an exquisite blend of melodious music and delectable dancing; both choreographed by the dancer herself. Then came the Krishna Sabdam, an Ashta padi (Mohanam) and the Padam with utterly graceful undulations to the accompaniment of Swati Thirunal’s composition in Ahiri with its rich poetry and pure lyricism.

The Tillana in Behag (Mishra chapu) was introduced with the hauntingly beautiful notes from T. S. Sankaran’s flute. In the concluding item, “Sita Swayamvaram” (Ragamalika), the episode of the marriage of Sita, from Tulsidas, Ramacharitamansa, Sonal showed her virtuosity, representing the various moods, the characters, the events, the theme, all through stylised symbolic gestures and abhinaya. It is Sonal the perfectionist’s intellectual perception of this great art form, and her capacity to perform well, that has made her the many-splendoured artist that she is today. Those who were seeing her

after over two years here must have realised that she is trying to scale new heights, and eminently succeeding too.

The musicians accompanying Sonal Mansingh showed considerable accord, T.S. Sankaran only had to play the moorchana swaras of a raga and he instantly created a new atmosphere, a new mood and the stage was set for the entry of Sonal for her next item. It was obvious that there is much in store in his armoury but, being a disciplined artist, he never transgressed the limits for the occasion. The dulcet tones of Kausalya Rajaram’s vena blended with the rest with unobtrusive charm. Radha Krishna’s vocal support had a purity of style and amply proved that singing a kriti that is well-known, or not, for a dance recital, is a different proposition, a different metier, to singing it in a vocal concert. This dichotomy is understood when one realises that, in a dance recital, a vocalist has to play the unusual role of an accompanist. Kathirvelu’s Nattuvangam was competent and almost came up to the exacting demands made on him by Sonal Mansingh. Somewhere, during his travels, he seemed to have left part of his voice behind which he could not trace; and he had the tortured look of a martyred soul. But he was valiant. The mridangam by T. R. Dandapani, like Arnold Bennett’s prose, “did its duty without attracting attention” and the dancer’s wrath.

One’s main regret was that Sonal did not perform the much anticipated Odissi which had enchanted the audience here two years ago. But then, Indian solo dancing is labour-intensive. And to take around a team of accompanists necessary to cover a wide repertoire while on tour away from home base becomes a major logistical problem. Nevertheless, it was an evening memories are made of.

Musical Instruments Exhibition

Do you know that there are no less than 58 different pieces in a violin; “its pores all full of music; stained like the meerschaum, through and through, with the concentrated hue and sweetness of all the harmonies that have kindled and faded on its wings”? The same may be true *mutatis mutandis* of every musical instrument, fashioned by great craftsmen, not all of them an Amati or Stradivarius perhaps, but yet good enough to be capable of showering fine music on our consciousness. Keen brains, delicate hands and dedicated artisans are needed to make musical instruments. A visit to the Development Centre of Musical Instruments, headed by Sri T. Lokanadha Sarma, himself a fine vocalist, will be a prelude to an understanding of the splendid skills required to make an instrument. It is to the credit of this pioneering department that if invited, they are ready to arrange Exhibitions that both instruct and excite one’s understanding at a nominal cost.

IMPRESSIVE SHOW

A friend of mine once consoled me “Don’t worry if you are not interested in flowers now; one day they will grow on you!” with sepulchral humour.

This would certainly not apply in the case of musical instruments, an impressive exhibition of over 60 of which were on display for the public at the Kerala Fine Arts Society Hall, Cochin, for a week. These had been assembled with much care and dedication by the Development Centre for Musical Instruments under its director at Madras, T. Lokanadha Sarma who was here with his team of experts to supervise the exhibition, to explain, and to demonstrate the use of the instruments.

Many of the instruments exhibited are made with care for minute details culled from sculptures, references in old scriptures and from sketches made in different museums. Whether they are replicas or originals is a matter of interest only to a purchaser of antiques—or snobs, as Arthur Koestler pointed out in his “Essay on Snobbery” some years ago.

Mr. Sarma, is a modest soft-spoken man. There is no need for him to raise his voice except when singing; and Sarma is a vocalist by his own right and, in fact, is a regular broadcaster of vocal music from All India Radio. Got his B. Mus. from the Central College Music, (then, Carnatic Music) when Musiri Subramania Iyer was its principal. He did his M. Mus. from Venkateswara University after which he became a disciple of Chittoor Subramaniam Pillai. Then, a stint as lecturer in musicology at the Government Music College, Secunderabad.

He has been with the Development Centre since 1979 where he has built it up to what it is today. It has the only museum in the country devoted solely to the exhibition of Indian musical instruments. Some of his plans are to have audio-visual facilities to give an idea of how an instrument sounded and how it was actually played, and also to have a training programme for craftsmen who would learn from master craftsmen.

The exhibition displays a wide variety of Indian instruments, many of them showing man’s astonishing ingenuity in his search for a musical idiom, a medium, from time immemorial, not only in tonal quality but also in their very structure and shape.

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Cultural Scene in Bombay

By

Dr. Sulochana Rajendran.

The art of Bharata Natyam is vast as an ocean. It knows no regional barrier nor any language shackle. Its choreographic scope is immense. So also the sources are rich. If it was the 'Nirupanas' in Marathi of King Serfoji of the 18th century highlighted last quarter, this quarter the pride of place goes to Bharata Natyam Margam in Gujarati, presented at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

Toiling over years on the subject, Elakshi Thakore of Nritya Bharati, Ahmedabad struck on the idiom towards the close of the seventies and choreographed the devotional hymns and verses of bards and poets of Gujarat into this gesture-language. The outcome was the addition of a new chapter to the classical art form.

Bharatham in Gujarati

Though the credit of choreographing a full-fledged Bharata Natyam in Gujarati goes to Elakshi Thakore, the idea of adapting Bharata Natyam to Gujarati language and locale was mooted by the late Anjali Merh, of Kalakshetra, who headed the dance faculty of the M. S. University, Baroda, of which Elakshi herself is an alumnus. "Chandramowleeswar Kuravaji" in Gujarati was Anjali's brain-child and she composed and choreographed it, setting Gujarati lyrics in appropriate Hindustani and Karnatak Ragas. It had an impact all its own.

Now the Bharata Natyam margam proved yet another milestone in the progress of the art. Besides Pushpanjali and Jathiswaram, verses chosen from Mahakavi Nanalal "Mara Nayana Ni Alas Re Na Nirakhya, Hari Ne Jari" set to Ragamalika in Karnatak Ragas like Kam-bhoji, Todi, Chakravakam served the requirements of a Sabdam. Meera's popular Bhajan "Mukhdani Maya Lagi Re Mohan Pyara" in Kapi, choreographed with well-chiselled adavu Kandigai interspersing the expressive Sancharis, convincingly fitted in the Varnam format.

The Padams

For the Padams, Elakshi had a poem of Sarojini Naidu on the magic flute translated into Gujarati, "Taru Madhu Bansuri", echoing a Nayika's pangs of love accentuated by Cupid's arrows and cast in the poignant Bhimplasi, a devotional "Mandir Taru Vishwa Rupalu" adoring Shiva in the swaying Desh, and an Ashtapadi of Jayadeva.

There was that impeccable purity in technique, a tonal harmony that meshed finely with the visual and sustaining element in essaying an expression. Well defined Nritya articulated with clarity and neatness added vividness of movement. The deployment of ensemble and duo dance enhanced the visual appeal. Over and above, diligently trained dancers displayed in solo and in groups an inner rapport, performing with absolute ease and with a relish.

Significantly enough, Ganesan's resonant, evocative vocal lent sustaining support to the visual while Elakshi's Nattuvangam added dignity and sobriety.

Sankara Mattham Concerts

The annual Sankara Mattham benefit concerts towards the close of February were Maharajapuram Santhanam's vocal and N. Ramani's flute

Santhanam's was an emotion steeped "anjali" to the Paramacharya who had only the other day blessed him godspeed on his musical career. Of the selections, "Chandrasekhara Yatindra Bhaje" in majestic Sankarabharanam was a soulful rendition. He deployed all the leisure at his command in the alapana and niraval. In general, the concert that comprised a few prized gems such as Papanasam Sivan's "Sri Vathapi Ganapathiye" (Sahana), Muthiah Bhagavathar's "Ennal thelupudunu" (Mandari), the evocative "Kamakshi Bangaru" (Varali) of Syama Sastri and Arabhi of the unique Maharajapuram texture, heightened with Swati Tirunal's "Narasimha Mamava", besides a lilting Nalinakanthimati Ragamalika touched the heights of musical ecstasy.

And as a pleasant surprise to the listeners, Santhanam's son, Ramachandran with his shimmering Hamir Kalyani, registered as a rightful scion of the Maharajapuram family.

Flute Ramani

Ramani chose to be more light-veined and entertaining—in a combination of Ragas of old-time grandeur and of rare charm and culminating in an odd-grouped Ranjani Pallavi. Bindumalini ("Entamuddo") had that elusive charm delicately but carefully embossed on the alapana, while Bhairavi and Mohanam

moved on in gay abandon with a variety of pyrotechnics. Kamakshi swarajathi and "Nannupalimpa" were treated with usual verve.

Accompanying both were M. Chandrasekhar (Violin), Vellore Ramabadrar (Mridangam) and E. M. Subramaniam (Ghatam) who highlighted the mood the main artistes evoked.

Sriram's Flowering Talent

An AIR prize-winner violinist, first in Karnatak and second in Hindustani, Sriram Parasuram had a Godsend experience when he brilliantly accompanied (as a last minute choice in the March concert of the Shanmukhananda Sabha) the veteran vocalist, the vilambakala *samrat* M. D. Ramanathan, but under challenging circumstances. A plus two examinee, he came straight from the examination hall and played with an enviable poise, skill and high virtuosity, drawing repeated cheers from the vast audience.

The repertoire comprised an invocation of the planet Saturn, the lord of the day, "Divakara thanujam" (Yadukula Kambhoji), a salutation to the Ramadhoota "Pahi Rama Dhoota" (Vasanta varali) and a sagacious "Parama pavana Rama" (Purvi Kalyani) with elaborate alapana, niraval and swaras capping with his usual offerings of Tyagaraja's Utsava sampradaya and Divyanama keertanas. Understanding accompaniment was provided by mridangist Nagore Ambi Iyer and the young enthusiast Hari Shankar (Kanjira).

Veena-Sitar

In February the Sabha presented Principal K.S. Narayanaswamy and Kartik Kumar, the sitar guru, in Veena and Sitar solos, which had the silken touch and a soothing effect. Mridangam vidwan

Chandramouli and youngster Sriram Parasuram deftly accompanied the vainika.

Fluid Dance

Petite Chandrika, whose cute little figure belies her capacity, is a dancer with fluid expressions and mature control. A disciple of Vyjayantimala Bali, Chandrika displayed her effortless technique in a leisurely pace in the recital at the NCPA-Mini in February under the aegis of the Bhulabhai Memorial Institute. Her Todi Varnam "Mohalagiri Meerude" of Tanjore Sivanandam of the Tanjore Quartet, was a visualisation of artistic placidity, the sancharis touched up with subtle 'chodukku'.

Vani- Meera Excel

Versatile Vani and vivacious Meera, senior disciples of Rajarajeswari Bharatanatya Kala Mandir, have over the years evolved a fine style of duo dancing which

lends the dance exposition a fluent dramatic unfoldment. Something new is always inducted in the choreography of their dynamic Guru Kalyanasundaram, a new mould to a time-honoured traditional number, apart from fresh repertoire,

One such was their recital at the Music Academy's (Bombay) annual festival. While a whole set of Pancha Nadai was incorporated in one sequence in the Sankarabharana Jathiswaram, each of the adavu kandigai, twirled on a different laya formulation in the Useni Swarajathi, "Emayalaadina" and the Pharaz Tillana bristled in 'edakku' take-off.

Freshly choreographed, the Ashtapadi "Yaa ramitha Vanamalina", designed with a series of incidents where the gopis became entranced by the 'aura' of Krishna was touching. Its musical setting in Hindustani modes retaining the refrain in Punnagavarali, struck the deeper chords of evocation.



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"Veena Gana"

There are numerous little bodies in Madras functioning under the banner of "Chamber music" for many years now. Almost all of them have changed their *modus operandi* to that of the bigger Sabhas as a sheer backlash of survival, but find themselves in a half-way house-achieving neither big money nor producing pure sampradaya music. As the wag put it, chamber music is often lethal Chamber music. Their *raison d'être* has gone.

"Veena Gana", sponsored by Dr. S. Ramanathan and Sri V. S. Shankar, stands for brave new worlds, such as the presentation of Carnatic music in its crystalline purity, grace, lucidity and of course, conciseness. The choice of Veena by our forebears as the true vehicle of music rests on its culture being an antithesis of musical dandyism and being made up of suggestiveness, softness in adumbration of phrases and subtlety of colouring through appropriate gamakas. It has a symbiotic relationship with vocal sampradaya. With its education and enjoyment are identical.

Playing on the Veena has to be a haven of taste. Some of the greatest art is ineloquent—and the Veena's lack of bawdy eloquence is its greatest charm. The listener who hears great music performed on the Veena has necessarily to imagine a third dimension and to make that instinctive effort of the mind required to grasp greatness in any art. Those who were privileged to hear the great Veena Dhanammal will know what this means.

Three mikeless recitals have been arranged by "Veena Gana" so far, before compact, knowledgeable, humble audiences amidst a serene environment. Carnatic music's essences were carefully distilled and wafted resulting in fragrant *immortelle*. The delicious "thanam" renderings of Ranganayaki Rajagopalan in the latest concert were out of this world. Nostalgic memories of the great Maestro Sambasiva Iyer (her guru) stabbed one's thoughts. Let "VEENA GANA", the slender plant, grow on the trellis supplied by its conscientious sponsors to render true service to Carnatic music.

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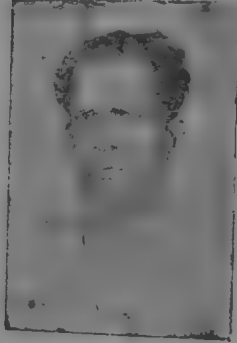
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நாதஸ்வரஜோதி திருவாவடுதுறை

என். ராஜரத்னம் பிள்ளையின் சங்கீத லக்ஷியங்கள்

(A.I.R. க்குக்கொடுத்த பேட்டி : (10-10-55)

கேள்வி : எங்கள் கார்ட், நங்கூர் சென்று சில கேள்விகள் கேட்கலாமென்று வந்திருக்கிறோம். அவை : என் ஸ்லாம் எப்படியோ?

இராஜ : பவுடர் ரொட்டி.

கேள்வி : சரி. குருகுலவாசம் செய்யுது என்பது மட்டைய சங்கீத உலகத்தில் அழைப்பை ஏற்பாடாக இருந்து வருகிறது. நங்கூரைய குருகுல வாசத்தைப் பற்றிய அனுபவங்கள் கொஞ்சம் எடுத்துச் சொல்லுவீர்களா?

இராஜ : சரி. என்னுடைய குருகுலவாசம் ரொம்ப கஷ்டப்பட்டு செய்து குலவாசம். சுமார் 5 வயது 6 வயதிலேயே சரளியிலிருந்து ஆரம்பம். எனது சிறிய தம்பனும் கதிரேசன் பிள்ளை என்று நாதஸ்வர வித்வான் ஒருவர் இருந்தார். அவர் ஒரு பெரிய வித்வானும் அல்ல. சாதாரணமான ஒரு வித்வான் தான். சரளி முதல் வர்ணம் ஒரு 10 கீர்த்தனங்கள் வரையில் அவரிடம் தயாராச்சு. அப்பிறம் திருவாவடுதுறை மடத்து அந்தக் காலத்திலே ரொம்பப் பெரிய பண்டார சந்தியாக இருந்த ஸ்ரீலக்ஷ் அம்பலவாண தேசிகர் அவர்கள், அந்த சமயம் ஆரீன வித்வானாக இருந்த திருக்கோடி காவல் கிருஷ்ணய்யர் அவர்களைக் கூப்பிட்டு "இந்த மாதிரி திருமருகல் நடேசனுடைய

குரலை ஓர பையன் திருக் கிருன் அன்றுத சினை பண்ணி கொடுப்பீர்களா நல் ரொம்ப சிறிய இற்கும். உலகத்திலேயே உம்மை விட பெரிய வித்வான் கிடையாது. உடைய ரொம்ப புகர் வாய் தவன் தான். பிள்ளைக்கு சங்கீத தான் சொல்லிக் கொடுக்க வேண்டும்" என்று சொன்னார்.

அதன் பேரில் நான் திருக் கோடி காவல் தண்ணய்யர் அவர் களிடத்தில் சினை கொடுத்தேன். சினைச் செய்து கொண்டு வரும் பொழுது 'பியாகட' வர்ணம் பாடமாடி ஆதி தாள வர்ணம் அதுவும் பாடமாடி இருந்தது. அது முடிந்து ஒரு வாரம் கழித்து சஹானாவில் "கிரிபை நெல்" என்னும் அய்யர்வாள் கீர்த்தனம் சொல்லிக் கொடுத்துக் கொண்டிருந்தார். சரி, அப்பொழுது பத்துப்பேர் கூடியிருந்தார்கள். பெரிய வித்வானுச்சே கிருஷ்ண ய்யர்வாள். கூட்டமாக இருக்கும் எல்லோரும் வந்து உட்கார்ந் திருக்கும் பொழுது 'அந்த வர்ணத்தைப்பாடு' என்றார்.

கேள்வி : யார்?

இராஜ : என் குரு திருக்கோடிகாவல் கிருஷ்ணய்யர்வர்கள் சொன்னார். சரி, என்று பியாகட வர்ணத் தைப் பாடினேன். பாடி பல்லவி

ஆரம்பித்து இரண்டு அடி முடிந்தது. பாடும் பொழுது "பதபீதாப" என்ற இடத்தை மொட்டையாக பாவம் வராமல் பாடினேன். பின்னால் திரும்பிப் பார்த்தவுடனே அவருடைய பிடில் வில் வந்து என்னுடைய மூக்குக்குள் ஏறிப்போச்சு. என்ன, கோபம் வந்து மூக்கிலே வில்லாலே குத்தி விட்டார்களே என்றேன். "ஈ எப்படிபாடினே? பேகடையினுடைய ராகச் சாயலையே நான் அந்த வர்ணத்திலே நான் உனக்கு அளிச்சிருக்கேன். அதை விட்டுவிட்டு நீ ஏன் இப்படி பாடியும்" என்று சொன்னார். அவ்வளவு எல்லாம் கஷ்டப்பட்டு நான் குருகுல வாசம் பண்ணினேன்.

பின்னால் கோனேரிராஜபுரம் வைத்தியர் வந்து சொல்லிக் கொடுத்தார். 9 வயசிலேயே ஒரு பாட்டுக் கச்சேரிக்கு ஏற்பாடாயிற்று. தாள சம்பந்தமாக அம்மாசத்திரம் கண்ணுச்சாமி பிள்ளை (பெரிய தவில் வீதவான்) அவரிடம் பயிற்சி பெற்றேன். எங்கள் திருமருகல் நடேச நாயனக்காரர் இடத்திலேயே அவர் தவில் வாசித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தார். அவர் பெரிய சுருநான வீதவான். அவர் காலத்திலேயே அவரை ஸ்ரீலங்கா பண்டார சந்திரி அம்பலவாண தேசிகர் அழைத்துக்கொண்டு வந்து அவரைத் தாள சம்பந்தமானது எல்லாம் எனக்குச் சொல்லி வைக்கச் சொன்னார். உடனே 9 வயதிலேயே நாகஸ்வர சிஷையும்.

கேள்வி அவ்வளவு சிறு பிரயத்திலேயேவா?

இராஜ ஆமாம். நாகஸ்வரத்தையும் பண்டார சந்திரி அவர்கள் நான்

வாசிக்க வேண்டுமென்று சொன்ன தினாலே சாதகம் பண்ண ஆரம்பிச்சேன். 12, 12½ வயசுக்கெல்லாம் மடத்துக்குப் போய் நாகஸ்வர வித்வானாகச் சேர்ந்தேன்.

கேள்வி சரி. முதல் முதல்லே நீங்கள் கச்சேரி செய்யும் பொழுது என்ன பிரயம் இருக்கும்?

இராஜ பாட்டுக்கச்சேரியா? நாகஸ்வர கச்சேரியா?

கேள்வி ஓ! பாட்டுக் கச்சேரிதான் முதலிலே செய்தீர்கள் இல்லியா?

இராஜ ஆமாம். முதல்லே 8½க்கு மேல் 9 வயசுக்குள் இருக்கும். அப்பொழுது, திருவாவடுதுறைக்கு சமீபத்திலே கோட்டூர் என்ற இருக்கிறது. அது பெரிய அக்ரஹாரம். ரொம்ப ஞானஸ்தர் இருக்கிற இடம். மகாராஜபுரம், திருக்கோடிகாவல், கோட்டூர், துயிலி, கஞ்சனூர் இப்படி, அது எல்லாம் பெரிய அக்ரஹாரங்கள். பெரிய ஞானஸ்தர்கள் எல்லாம் இருக்கிற இடம். அந்த கோட்டூர் அனந்தராமய்யர், கிருஷ்ணய்யர்வாள் வீட்டிலே கல்யாணத்திற்குப் போயிருந்தேன். அப்பொழுது எனக்கு மாயவரம் பிடில் வித்வான் சுப்பையரவர்கள் பிடிலும், அழக நம்பியாப்பிள்ளையவர்கள் மிருதங்கமும் பக்கவாத்யம். முதல் கச்சேரி நான் பண்ணினேன்.

கேள்வி நாகஸ்வர கச்சேரி?

இராஜ 12, 12½ வயசிலே அம்பலவாண தேசிகர் அவர்களுடைய சந்திரி தானத்திலே திருக்கோடிகாவல் கிருஷ்ணய்யர் மகாமகோபாத்தியாய உ.வே. சாமிநாதய்யர், அவர்கள் எல்லோருக்கும் முன்

நிலையில் பண்டார சந்திரி கலை மண்டபத்திலே நாகஸ்வர அரங்கேற்றம் நடந்தது.

கேள்வி ரொம்ப சரி. இனி, இந்த நாகஸ்வர வாத்தியம் நம்முடைய தமிழ் நாட்டிலே ஆதியில் இருந்தே சிறந்த வாத்தியமாக இருந்து வந்திருக்கிறது. இதிலும் சிறப்பாக தென் பாரதத்திற்கே உரியதாக விளங்கி வந்திருக்கிறது. இந்த நாகஸ்வர வாத்தியத்தைக் கையாளுவது எப்படி என்பதைப் பற்றி உங்களுடைய யோசனையை அறிய யாவருமே ரொம்ப ஆவலாக இருப்பார்கள். அதைப் பற்றி கொஞ்சம் சொல்லுங்கள்.

இராஜ சங்கீதத்திலே எந்தத் தொழிலையும் செய்து விடலாம். ஆனால் ரொம்பவும் கஷ்டப்பட்டு சாதிக்கிறது என்பது நாகஸ்வர வாத்தியத்தான். நாகஸ்வரத்தைக் கையாளுவது என்றால் பாலயத்திலே வாய்ப்பாட்டு ஞானம் வேண்டும். பாட்டு ஞானம் இல்லாதவன் விரல் திட்டமாகத்தான் வாசிக்கத்தான் முடியும். முதலிலே வாய்ப்பாட்டு சிஷைப் பூராவாக ஆகி அப்புறம் நாகஸ்வரத்தை எடுத்தால் தான் அதைச் சரியாக கையாள முடியும். சாதகம் செய்ய வேண்டும். 3 வேளையாவது தினம் சாதகம் செய்ய வேண்டும். வேறுமானால் பெரிய பெரிய "நாஜீவாதார, தாரினி தெலுசு கொண்டி", இந்த மாதிரி பெரிய கீர்த்தனங்களை எல்லாம் நாகஸ்வரத்தில் எவ்வளவு நேரம் தள்ளி வாசிக்க முடியுமோ அவ்வளவு ஒவ்வொரு நாளும் கொஞ்சம் கொஞ்சம் காலத்தைத் தள்ளி விட்டு வாசிக்கணும். ராகங்களிலே சுத்த மத்திம் ராகத்திற்கு சுத்த மத்திம் பேச வேணும். பிரதி மத்திம்ராகத்திற்கு பிரதி மத்திம் பேச வேணும்.

கேள்வி தெளிவாகவும் இருக்க வேணும் எல்லாம்.

இராஜ ஆமாம். சுத்த மத்திம் பேச வில்லையானால் அதில் ஒன்றும் புண்ணியம் இல்லை. அதில் ரொம்பவும் கவனமாக செய்ய வேணும். இப்பொழுது அந்த மாதிரி உழைக்க மாட்டேன் என்கிறார்கள். ஏனென்றால் அவர்களுக்குப் பல ஜோலிகள். ஏதோ ஒரு அளவுக்கு வாசித்தால் போதும். கச்சேரிக்குப் போனால் போதும் என்கிற தினுசிலே இருக்கிறார்களே தவிர சாதகம் பண்ணுமையே விட்டு விட்டார்கள் நாகஸ்வரக்காரர்கள். இது என்னுடைய அபிப்பிராயம். 75 வயசானாலும் நாகஸ்வரம் வாசிக்கலாம். காரணம் அன்றைக்கு சாதகம் பண்ணினால் வாத்தியத்திற்கு நடுக்கம் ஏற்படாது கெட்டும் போகாது, வாத்தியத்தில் 'தம்'மும் கெடாது. 70-80 வயசு வரையிலும் வாசித்தாலும் கூட தினம் சாதகம் பண்ணித் தான் ஆக வேணும். அது ஒரு பெரிய கடுமையான வாத்தியம். அந்த உழைப்பு இருந்தால் வாத்தியம் கெடாது.

கேள்வி நாதஸ்வரத்துக்கு தவில் பக்க வாத்தியமாக இருக்கிறதே. அதைப் பற்றி.....

இராஜ பக்க வாத்தியம் எவ்வளவோ பேர் வாசித்திருக்கிறார்கள். அம்மாபேட்டை பக்கிரியினிருந்து என்னிடத்தில் வாசித்தவர்களில் நீடாமங்கலம் மீனாட்சி சுந்தரம் பிள்ளையும், மலைக்கோட்டை பஞ்சாமி பிள்ளையும், அதற்கு முந்தி வழுவூர் முத்திவேலு பிள்ளை, திருச்செங்காட்டங்குடி ருத்திராபதி, வேதாரண்யம் பொன்னுசாமி

இப்படிபெல்லாம் தவில்காரர்கள் என்னிடத்தில் இருந்திருக்கிறார்கள். எனக்கு இரண்டு நேத்திரமாக விளங்கியது நீடாமங்கலம் மினுசுரிசந்தரம் பிள்ளையும், மலைக் கோட்டை பஞ்சாமியும்.

கேள்வி திமிரி, பாரி என்பதாக நாதஸ்வரத்தில் இரண்டு வகைகள் சொல்கிறார்களே, அதில் பாரியை பிரபலத்துக்குக் கொண்டு வந்தது.....?

இராஜ நான்தான். இந்த பாரி ஆதியிலேயே உண்டான பாரிதான். நான் ஆக ஒன்றும் கண்டு பிடிக்கவில்லை. அதற்குக் காரணம் திருவாரூர் கோவில்தான்.

கேள்வி எப்படி?

இராஜ ஆதியிலேயே தியாகராஜர் பூலோகத்திற்கு கையலங்கிரியிலிருந்து வருகையிலேயே இந்த பாரி நாதஸ்வரம் வந்திருக்கிறதாக சாஸ்திரம் சொல்கிறது. பலவிதமானவாத்யங்களும் தியாகராஜர் கூடவே வந்ததாம். திருவாரூரில் இப்பவும் ஒரு கட்டை சுருதியிலே பாரி நாதஸ்வரம் கோவிலிலேயே இருக்கிறது. அந்த சந்திரதானத்திலே தியாகராஜனை ஆகும் பொழுது அந்த நாதஸ்வரம்தான் வாசிக்க வேணும். திருவாரூரில் அதற்கென்று ஒரு நாதஸ்வர குடும்பமே இருக்கிறது. அதற்குப் பின்னாலே, யாரோ கிளப்பி விட்டிருக்கிறார்கள் திமிரியை. நான் இதை ரொம்பவும் காதைத் தொனிக்கிறது என்பதாக நினைத்து, 4 கட்டை சுருதியை ஆரம்பம் பண்ணினேன். சபாக் கச்சேரிகள், மற்றும் பெரிய ஞானஸ்தர்கள் கூடி, ஒரு கட்டி

டத்திற்குள் இருந்து அமைதியாக கேட்க வேணும் என்றால் அந்த 4 கட்டை சுருதியும் கொஞ்சம் அருவகுப்புத்தான் காட்டும். அதனாலே அதை இரண்டு கட்டைக்குக் கொண்டு வந்தேன். உலக மக்கள், ஞானஸ்தர்கள் எல்லோரும் ஒப்புக்கொண்ட பிற்பாடு இப்போது வழக்கத்திலே எல்லோரும் வாசித்துக் கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள்.

கேள்வி உங்கள் வித்தியாப்பியாச காலத்திலே பிரபலமாக இருந்த நாதஸ்வர வித்வான்கள் யார் யார்?

இராஜ செம்பொன்னூர் கோவில் ராம சுவாமி நாயனக்காரர், மன்னார்குடி பக்கிரி நாயனக்காரர் இவர்கள் இரண்டு பேரும் ரொம்ப பிரபலமாக இருந்தார்கள்.

கேள்வி அவர்களுடைய நாகஸ்வர கச்சேரியை நீங்கள் அடிக்கடி கேட்டிருக்கிறீர்களா?

இராஜ கேட்டும் இருக்கிறேன். கூடவும் வாசித்திருக்கிறேன். அவர்களைோடு சண்டையும் போட்டு வாசித்திருக்கிறேன்.

கேள்வி நாகஸ்வர உலகத்தில் பெரிய புகழ்ச் செல்வம் தங்களைத் தேடி வந்திருக்கிறது எல்லோருக்கும் தெரிந்த விஷயம். இதுவரை ஆயிரக்கணக்கான கச்சேரிகள் செய்திருப்பீர்கள். கோவில் கச்சேரிகள், கல்யாண கச்சேரிகள் சரித்திர முக்கியத்துவம் வாய்ந்த சிறப்பான நிகழ்ச்சிகள், இப்படி பலவகையான சந்தர்ப்பங்களிலே உங்களுடைய இசையை மக்கள் பருகி இருப்பார்கள். ஒரு விஷயம் கேட்கலாமா? நீங்கள்

ரொம்பவும் அபூர்வமாக வாசித்தோம் என்று உள்ள கச்சேரிகள் நிறைய இருக்கும். அவைகளைப் பற்றி கொஞ்சம் நினைவு படுத்திச் சொல்லலாமா?

இராஜ முக்கியமாக சில இடங்களைக் குறிப்பிடுகிறேன். திருவாவடுதுறை மடத்தில் என் மனசு திருப்திபட அனேக வருஷம் வாசித்திருக்கிறேன். அடுத்தது மைசூர் மகாராஜா அரண்மனையிலும், காலஞ்சென்ற மகாராஜா வின் காலத்திலும் அந்த மகாராஜா காலம் சென்ற பிறகும். வாசித்திருக்கிறேன். மைசூர் மகாராஜாவுக்கு தவில் கிவில் இந்த பக்க வாத்யங்கள் எல்லாம் பிடிக்காது. வெறும் நாகஸ்வரம் ஒத்து. சிவ பூஜை சமயத்தில் - இரண்டு மணி மகாராஜா மட்டும் தான் பூஜை பண்ணுவார் - அப்பொழுது தான் அதை கேட்கிறது. அப்புறம் மூன்றாவதாக திருவனந்தபுர மகாராஜா அவர்களுக்கு என் வாத்யத்தில் அளவு கடந்த பிரியம் உண்டு. வெளிக் கச்சேரிகளும் நிறைய வாசித்திருக்கிறேன். மற்றும் திருநெல்வேலி ஜில்லாவிலும் அளவு கடந்து வாசித்திருக்கிறேன்.

கேள்வி ரொம்ப சந்தோஷம். நாகஸ்வர வித்வான்கள் இசைத்தொண்டு புரிந்து வருகிறார்கள். இந்த இசை பாரம்பரியம் ஒங்கி வளர இள வித்வான்களுக்கு நீங்கள் சொல்லக்கூடிய யோசனைகள்

ஏதாவது இருந்தால் சொல்லுங்கள்.

இராஜ சற்றுமுன்னமேயே சொன்னேன் நல்ல அய்யர்வான் கீர்த்தனங்கள், தீக்ஷிதர், சாமா சாஸ்திரிகள் கீர்த்தனங்கள் சாதகம் ஆகி, ராகத்தை கர்நாடக சுத்தம் குறையாமல் வாசிக்க வேணும். தேசிய வழி ஒன்றும் கலக்காமலும் தங்களுடைய சுய நலத்தைக் கருதாமலும், பிறருக்காக வேண்டி கர்நாடக சுத்தத்தைக் குறைக்காமலும் இப்படி இருந்தால் முன்னேறலாம் இதற்காகவே அரசாங்கத்திலும் மத்திய சர்க்காரிடமும் சொல்லி சென்ற வருஷம் முதற் கொண்டு சென்னைக் கல்லூரியிலும் இப்பொழுது ஏற்பாடு நடந்து கொண்டு வருகிறது.

கேள்வி ராஷ்டிரபதியின் விருது தங்களுக்கு இந்த வருஷம் அளிக்கப் பட்டது. சர்க்கார் அளித்துள்ள இந்த கௌரவம் தேசத்து மக்கள் எல்லோரும் மனபூர்வமாக அளித்தகௌரவம்

இராஜ அது எனக்கு அளித்த கௌரவமே அல்ல, என்னைத் தயாரித்து இந்த நிலைமைக்குக் கொண்டு வந்த திருவாவடுதுறை பண்டார சந்திரி பூரீஸ்ரீ அம்பலவாண தேசிகர், திருக்கோடிகாவல் கிருஷ்ணய்யர் அவர்களுக்கே சாரும். தனிப்பட்ட கௌரவம் எனக்கு இருக்கிறதாக நான் கருதவில்லை. நமஸ்காரம். (Courtesy A.I.R. MADRAS and Dr. Semmanugudi Srinivasa Iyer, who kindly supplied the script)

ராமன் வழங்கிய தியாகராஜரின் “ டைரி ”

உப்பு தண்ணீரில் கரைந்தால், உப்பு உப்பு தான். தண்ணீரும் உப்புதான். சக்கரையும் வெல்லமும் அப்படித்தான். ஸ்ரீராமநவமிக்கு நீர்மோர் பானகம் கரைத்து ராமபிரானுக்கு நிவேதனம் செய்து பிறருக்கு வழங்குவதின் உண்மை என்னவாக இருக்க முடியும்?

எனது தன்மை எனது தன்மைதான், என்று மனிதன் தன்னை மனிதன் என்று ஒப்புக்கொள்ள வேண்டும். அப்படி ஒப்புக் கொள்ளுகின்ற மனிதன் தன்னை, தன் குடும்பம், தன் சமூகம் இதன் வரையிலும் தன்னை நிதர்சனப்படுத்திக் காட்டி விடுவது என்பதே உண்மை என்று பொருள். அவன் உண்மையுடன் வாழ்கிறான் என்றும் பொருள்.

இதை ரத்தினம் என்பது ரத்தினம் தான் என்று விளக்கி விட வேண்டும். தியாகப் பிரம்மத்தின் பஞ்சரத்தினக் கிரீத்தனைகள் என்பது, அவரின் சுயசரிதை என்பது ரத்தினம் என்பதுதான் விளக்கம்.

தவறைத் திருத்திக் கொண்டேன் என்று எழுதி, தவறை எழுதுவதும், தவறை மறைத்து நல்லவைகளை மட்டும் தன் பெயருடன் கோர்த்து எழுதுவதும், மஹான்கள் சுயசரிதை எழுதும் நடையே அல்ல.

சுய சரிதை

ராமபிரான் எதையும் சொல்லிலும், செயலிலும் மறைக்காமல் சுய சரிதையாய் வாழ்ந்து உயர்ந்த கடவுள். சத்திய விரதம் பூண்டவன் என்று பொருள் இல்லையா?

இதனால் தியாகப் பிரம்மத்திற்கு, தன்னைத் தியாகராஜன் என்று மட்டும் எடுத்துக் காட்ட உரிமை இருந்தது. அந்தத் தியாகராஜனை பக்தன் என்று எடுத்துக் காட்ட ராமனுக்கே உரிமை இருந்தது.

இதனால் தியாகராஜர் நாரதரின் ஓலைச் சுவடியால் சந்தேஞானம், அருள், இதனை எந்தவயதில் கைவரப் பெற்றாரோ அன்று முதல் ராம பக்தன் என்று பிரசித்தமானார். ராமரின் அருளும், பக்தியும், ஞானமும், இசையும், மஹாவிஷ்ணுவின் அவதார மஹிமையும், ராமனால் தியாகப் பிரம்மத்தின் வாயிலாக எழுதப்பட்டது. இது தியாகப்பிரம்மத்தின் சுயசரிதை என்று சொன்னாலும், அது ஞானமாயா?

இதை ஞாயம் என்றால், சுய சரிதை குறையுடன் எழுதப்பட்டது என்று பொருள்.

பதவி, பொருள், வந்தால் நடந்த அரியாயமும் மறைக்கப்படும் என்பது போல் தியாகராஜர் பஞ்சரத்தின கிரீத்தனையை எழுதவில்லை என்றால், அவரது வாழ்விலும் கடவுள் உண்மையை மறைத்தான் என்று ஆகிவிடும்.

கெட்டவனை நல்லவனாக்கியா, அல்லது நல்லவனை மாத்திரமா, அல்லது கெட்டது நல்லது கலந்த சிலரை மட்டும் ராமன் ஓரவஞ்சனையாக அருள் பாவிக்கிறார்? என்று கனவுளின் செயலை, சந்தேகமாக வே விளக்க வேண்டி விரும்.

ஒருவரின் சுயசரித 'டயரி'யை' நாம் இப்படித்தான் இருக்க வேண்டும் என்று எண்ணுவதாலும், அல்லது ஏன் இவரும் இப்படித் தாறுமாறாக வாழ்ந்து இருக்க

கிறார் என்று எண்ணுவதாலும் தான் நாம் பெரிய மனிதர்களே ஆவதில்லை. காரணம், நாம் தவறை. மறைக்கிறோம், மாற்றி எழுதுகிறோம், சொல்லக் கூசுகிறோம், அல்லது தவற்றைத் திருத்திக் கொள்ளுகிறோம், அல்லது அதற்குப் புதிய வியாக்கியானம் செய்கிறோம்.

நல்லவர்கள், பக்தர்கள், இதற்கு மாறாக தன்னைத் தானாகவே வைத்துக் கொண்டு பக்தி மாத்திரம் செய்கின்றனர். நெஞ்சில் புழக்கமும் அடைவதில்லை.

இதனால் ராமன் தியாகராஜரின் புகழைத் தன் மீது கிரீத்தனைகளாக எழுத, தியாகராஜன் உடன் தன் சரிதம் என்ற ஐந்து கிரீத்தனைகளை மட்டும் எழுதுகிறார். இதுவே பஞ்சரத்தினக் கிரீத்தனையின் உண்மை. மிகப் பெரிய பக்தனின் வாழ்வு, கடவுளின் கையில் மிகச்சிறிய உண்மையை ராமனின் மூலம் உலகிற்குச் சால்லுவதே எனது தன்மை, என்று அறிகிறார் தியாகப் பிரம்மம்.

இதனால், அவர் செய்தது என்பது ஐந்தே ஐந்து கிரீத்தனைகள் தான். மிச்சம் மீதி இறைவனுடையதே. அன்பர்களே, சுய சரிதவிளக்கத்தைக் கொள்ளுங்கள்.

தியாகராஜர் தனது சுயசரிதத்தை மாத்திரம் பஞ்சரத்தினக் கிரீத்தனை என்று எழுதி முடிக்கிறார். அதில், ஐந்தே ஐந்து பாடல்கள் தான் உள்ளன. தனது சொந்த "டைரியை" ராமரிடம் ஒப்படைக்கிறார். அதனால் அவர் தனது பூஜையில் தனது பஞ்சரத்தினக் கிரீத்தனையைத் தான் பாடுவார்.

நாம் இன்று, அவரது பஞ்சரத்தினத் தைப் பாடுவதும் அதை நமது வழியில் விமரிசிப்பதும், திருத்திப் பொருள் சொல்வதும், மனதில் அச்சம் கொள்வதும் பிறறது டைரியை நாம் படிப்பது போன்றதே. அதைத் தவறாக எண்ணினால், எண்ணு

கின்ற நாம் சமுதாயத்தில் முழு உண்மை பேசுபவர்கள் அல்ல என்று பொருள்.

மாற்றிச் சொன்னால் பொய்யர்கள் நாமே, எப்பொழுதும் நாம் இறைவனைப் பார்க்கப்போவதே இல்லை, என்றும் பொருள்.

ஐந்து தனிச் சுவடிகளில் தியாகராஜர் ஒவ்வொரு சுவடியிலும், ஒவ்வொரு கிரீத் தனையாக பஞ்ச ரத்தினக் கிரீத்தனைகளை எழுதிவைக்கிறார். அதுதான் அவர் எழுதிய சொந்த "டைரி". அந்த ஐந்து பாடல்கள் தான் அவரது சொந்தமூளை. அதனால், அதை மட்டும் தினமும் பூஜையில் தனது சொந்த மூளையைத் துதியாகக் கொண்டு பாடினார். மற்ற கிரீத்தனைச் சாம்ராஜ்யங்கள், அனைத்தும் ராம னுடையதே.

“ ஐகத்தானந்த காரக ”

“டைரியில்”— முதல் கிரீத்தனை— “ஐகத்—ஆனந்த—காரக—ஐய—ஜானகீ ப்ராண நாயக” என்பதே. இது நட்டை ராகம். ஆதிதாளம். இந்த கிரீத்தனை ராமனைப் புகழ்ந்து தனது நம்பிக்கையை, உறுதி செய்து, எழுதிய கருத்தே ஆகும். ஒருவனைப் புகழ்வதே தனது நம்பிக்கை என்பது தான் பொருள். அது பக்தியின் அப்பாற்பட்டதே அல்ல என்பதே கருத்து. பக்திக்கு முன், மனிதன் தோத்திரம் செய்வதைப் போன்றதே இது.

தன் மனைவி ஜானகியின் ப்ராண நாயகன் என்பதால், அவன் இன்பமுடன் வாழ வேண்டும் என்பதற்காக—ஐகம், என்ற உலகின் ஆந்தம் ராமன், என்று தியாகராஜர் சொல்லி முடித்திருக்கலாம். அப்படிச் சொல்லாமல், “காரகன்” என்கிறார். காரகன் என்றால் காரணம், என்று பொருள். ஜானகியின் ப்ராண காரகனே ஐகத்தின் ஆனந்த காரகன் என்பதால் இது தியாகராஜரின் சொந்தக் கருத்தே. அதாவது டைரியின் முதல் பக்கமே.

மனைவி இருந்தாலும், மனைவி இல்லா விட்டாலும் கடவுள் உலக மகிழ்ச்சியின் காரணமே இல்லையா?

“துடுகு கல”

டைரியின் இரண்டாவது பக்கம் கௌளை ராகத்தில் ஆதி தாளத்தில் ‘துடுகு...கல...நன்னே தோரதோடு குட் ரோசுரா...எந்தோ...கடு— துர் விஷய க்ருஷ்டுடை...கடிய கடியகு...நிண்டாரு.”

இக்கிர்த்தனை ஒருவரின் சொந்த டைரியைப் போன்றதே.

சிற்பின் பத்தால் இழுக்கப்பட்டு ஒவ்வொரு நொடியாலும், சிற்பின் பத்திலேயே துடுக்குகள் செய்தேன். உன் மீது பக்தி, நம்பிக்கை வரும்முன் தியாகராஜனுக்குத் தன் மீதே நாட்டமிருந்தது. அதனால், ராமனைப் பற்றி தர்க்கமும், த்வைத அத்வைதமும் அவனின் புகழும் பேசினேன். இது பக்தனின் உரிமையோ டைரியோ, என்பதுதான் உண்மை.

பின்பு மூன்றாவது கிர்த்தனை வருகிறது. இது ஆரபிராகம் ஆதிதாளம் ஆகும்

“ஸாதிஞ்சனே...”

“ஸாதிஞ்சனே ஓ மனஸா” என்பதே கிர்த்தனை. இதில் கிருஷ்ணன், தான் நினைத்ததை முடிக்கவேண்டும், அதாவது ஸாதிக்கவேண்டும் என்று எண்ணி எதை எதையோ செய்து, தான் எண்ணியதையே சாதிக்கிறான். நானும் எண்ணியதை எல்லாம், வாசித்தால், என் நினைவிலும் இப்படிச்செய்த கண்ணன்தானே இருக்க முடியும். குழப்பம் எதற்காக? என்கிறார் இதுவும் தியாகராஜரின் சுயசரிதையில் மூன்றாம் பக்கமே.

“கன கனருசிரா...”

நான் காவது கிர்த்தனை...வராளி ராகம், ஆதி தாளத்தில் வருகிறது...இது

“...கன...கன ருசிரா...கன...கன...வஸன நின்னு”, என்பதே இதன் கருத்து..ராமா, உன்னைப் பார்க்கப் பார்க்க, எனக்கு ருசி, ஏற்படுகிறது என்பதே.

சரணத்தில்...ஒரு வரியைக் கவனியுங்கள்.....“தள தள மனுமுக...கன..., கவி கன...னீத... குலுக்குசேரே... கன் னுலனு ஜஞ்சே நின்னு”.

இதில், தள தள வென்றும், அழகும் முகமும் கொண்ட, சீதை ஓய்ந்ததுடன் கடைக்கண்ணால் உன்னைப்பார்க்கும், “உன்னைக் காணக் காண எனக்கு ருசி” என்கிறார் தியாகப்பிரம்மம். இது முழுக்க முழுக்க அவரின் சொந்த டைரியே.

“எந்தரோ...”

ஐந்தாவது பஞ்சரத்தின கிர்த்தனை ஸ்ரீராகத்திலும், ஆதி தாளத்திலும் வருகிறது. இது...“எந்தரோ மஹானுபாவுலு... அந்தரிகி வந்தனமு” என்பது.

தியாகராஜனாகிய நான் அனைவரின் உள்ளத்திலும் ராமனையே பார்க்கிறேன். ஒவ்வொருவரும் எதை எதை எப்படி எப்படிச் சொன்னாலும் எல்லோருமே மஹானுபாவர்கள் என்ற பக்குவத்தைப் பெற்றேன் என்கிறார் தியாகராஜர்.

பஞ்சரத்தினம் பக்தரின் டைரியே ஆகும். பிறறது டைரியை ஆராய்ச்சி யுடன் பார்ப்பதே தவறு.

ராமன் வழங்கிய தியாகப்பிரம்மத்தின் டைரியை அவன் வழங்கியதால் நாம் பார்க்கிறோம், நாம் படிக்கிறோம், நாம் கருத்து சொல்லுகிறோம் என்பதே உயர்வு.

ஓம்

ஞானி நெருர் சதாசிவ பிரம்மேந்திரர்